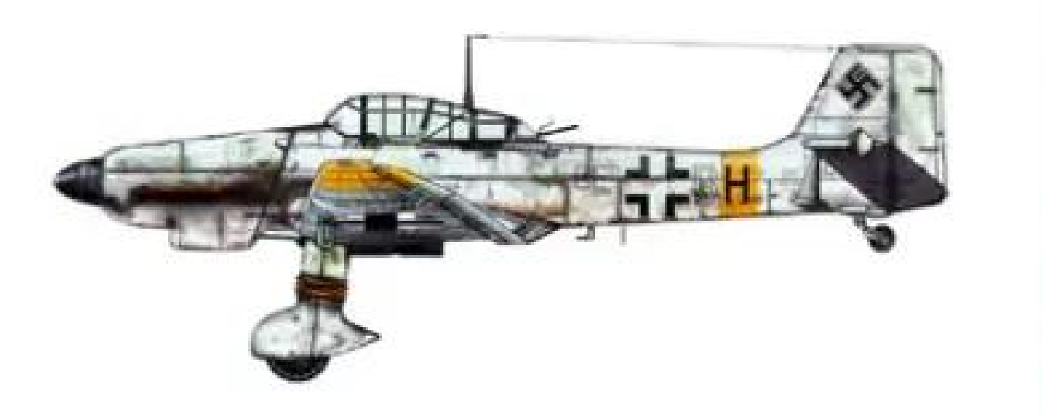

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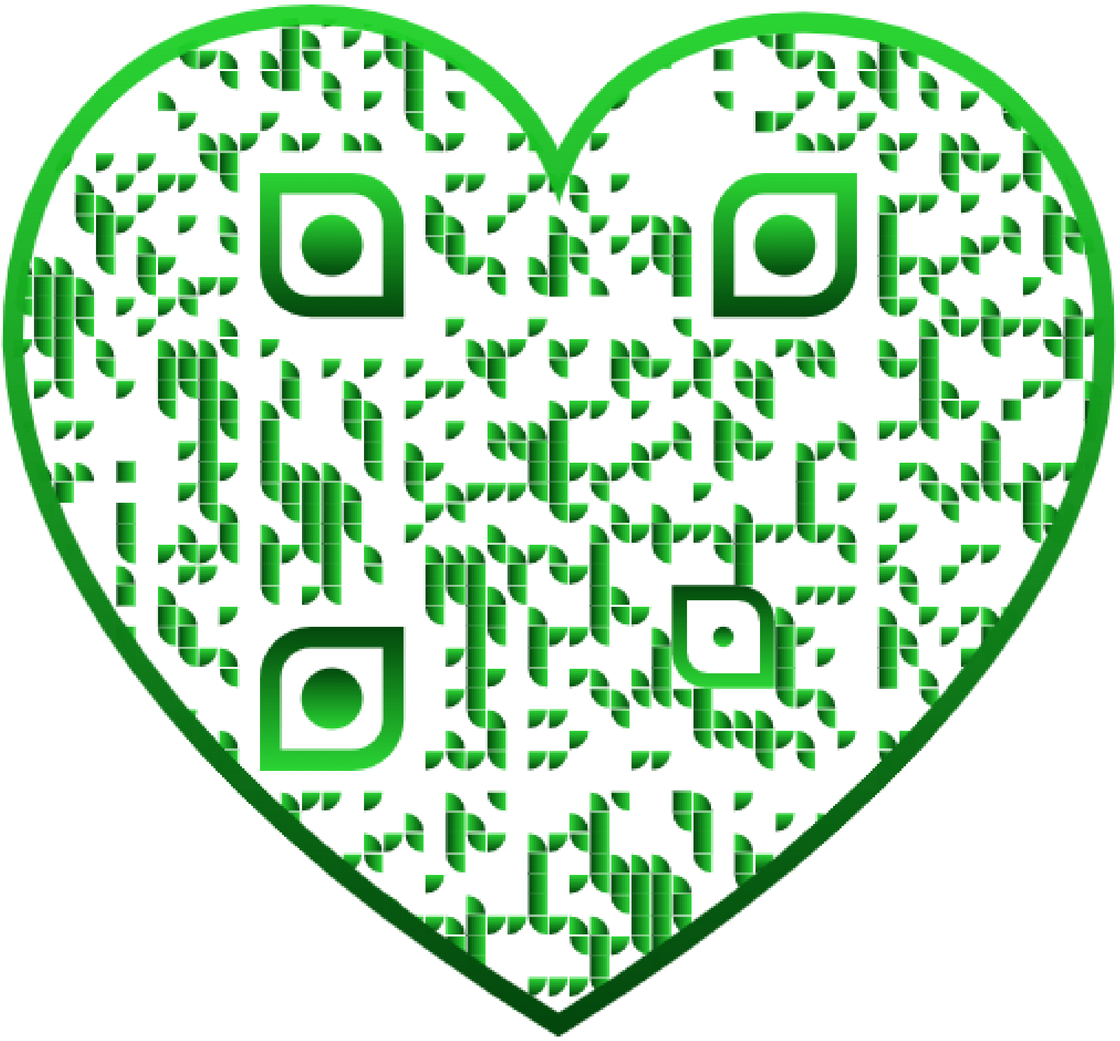

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Smyrna, TN 6/8 June
Tinker AFB, OK 27/29 June
Bremerton, WA 11/13 July
Milwaukee, WI 17/20 July

Oshkosh AirVenture, WI 21/27 July
Gold Coast Airshow, Australia 15/17 August
Cleveland, OH 29 August/1 September
Wildwood, NJ 5/7 September
Andrews AFB, MD 12/14 September
NAS Oceana, VA 19/21 September
Pacific Airshow, CA 3/5 October
Fleet Week San Francisco, CA 10/12 October
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Greg “Wired” Colyer with one of the AceMaker T-Birds.

ACE MAKER II
Anthony

FT-610
FT-306

AceMaker T-Birds with a Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II. (Mike Killian)

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THESE PAGES: Jim Tobul flying his Vought F4U-4 Korean War Hero *shortly after the aircraft was restored by WestPac Restorations. (Michael O'Leary)*

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Editorial & Production Staff
Michael O'Leary • Publisher/Editor • *moleary2challenge@gmail.com*
Matt Rippetoe • Art Director
Susan Duprey • Production Manager • *ed@challengeweb,.com*
Roger Cain • Social Media Manager/Antique Aircraft Editor • *jollyrogercain@comcast.net*
Steve Cox • Artist in Residence • *stevecox21@hotmail.com*
Bruce Orriss • Aviation Films Editor • *bruceorriss@gmail.com*
Doug Fisher • Warbird and Classic Report Editor • *dougsfno@cogeco.ca*
Jim Larsen • Air Racing Editor • *filmandflight@yahoo.com*
Bruce Lockwood • Technical Editor • *lockwoodaviation@yahoo.com*
Philip Makanna • WWI Aviation Editor • *phil@ghosts.com*
Ralph M. Pettersen • Propliner Editor • *rmpettersen@gmail.com*
Joe Scheil • Jet Warbirds Editor • *pbydreams@aol.com*
Tim Weinschenker • Golden Pylons Editor • *pylonguy2003@yahoo.com*
Steve Whitby • Air Tanker Editor • *srwhtby@verizon.net*
Howard Carter, Keith Charlot, Jim Dunn, William T. Larkins, Gerald Liang, Norm Taylor, James Thompson, Marshall Wainwright, Mark Watt • Contributors

Editorial & Advertising Offices
AIR CLASSICS, 9800-D Topanga Canyon Blvd., Chatsworth, CA 91311
Tel: 818.700.6868 (8:00-4:00 PST Mon.-Thurs.); FAX: 818.700.6282
E-mail: *mail@challengeweb.com*
Web: *www.challengemagazines.com*

Subscription Offices
AIR CLASSICS, PO Box 16149, North Hollywood, CA 91615
Tel: 818.286.3124
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MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

When it comes to the restoration of vintage and veteran aircraft, I just can't believe how lucky we are. All across the country (and indeed around the globe), we are seeing numerous restorations coming together on aircraft from the earliest days of flight right through to the jet age. In this issue, we examine how the National Museum of the USAF has re-restored their Curtiss Jenny. What is interesting to note is that our knowledge of restorations is always changing and hopefully improving. Each year adds to our accumulated wisdom of how aircraft were originally built and operated. There was a time beginning in the 1970s, where an airframe was gone through, unneeded items discarded, a general spruce-up applied, and away the plane went. For example, Mustangs would have their cockpits gutted, all unnecessary military equipment would be removed, and then the interior would be given a coat of glossy gray, some new instruments for the panel along with new radios, and the P-51 would be good to go.

Today, all that has pretty much changed. When Mikael Carlson restored the American Heritage Museum's Nieuport N.28 he got into details that were not even thought of a few decades ago. For example, he had the wood covering for the forward fuselage milled to the exact thickness of the original. Could the airplane have operated safely with a slightly thicker wood? Of course, it could have but we are now talking about exactly how the original was built. Same with the fabric covering. Today, there are many coverings Carlson could have utilized but he examined surviving fabric fragments and then had new Irish linen made to the exact weave count. Once again, could the plane have flown with a modern covering? Certainly. But we are now at a stage where we want originality — or what we currently perceive as originality. We want to understand exactly how these aircraft were built. Therefore, the study of surviving fragments is extremely important. Once again using original fabric that still carried paint from the Great War, Carlson studied these and finally began mixing his own paint so he could completely duplicate the color and how it was applied. None of this is easy nor inexpensive.

Just look at the *Stuka* project we are featuring in this issue. The fact that the majority of Junkers Ju 87D-5 drawings were destroyed with the end of the Second World War makes the task of restoration even that much more complex. The explosive device used by the German crew destroyed the center section of the dive-bomber. With that portion of the aircraft now gone, a restorer would turn to the original drawings to help replicate the structure. However, the drawings are also now gone. In the Czech Republic, the restorers tasked with returning the aircraft to flying status now have an incredibly difficult task in front of them. How do they cope? Fortunately, design computers now make reverse engineering a bit simpler. There are two surviving examples whose cockpits can be measured with laser devices that achieve a pin-point accuracy. From this, drawings will be made that will allow the structure to be rebuilt to the exactness of the day it left the Junkers factory.

Fortunately, surviving manuals and photographs show how equipment was arranged for the interior of the aircraft. As noted in the article, dedicated aviation enthusiasts throughout Europe are constantly on the search for original WWII aircraft equipment. Some of this material is found in old warehouses, some on battlefields, and some stuffed away in the dark corners of hangars. These dedicated individuals scour Europe for their finds and then make them available to restorers. As long-time readers of *Air Classics* fully realize, we have run many, many photos taken at the end of the war in Europe that illustrate mounds of captured aircraft and equipment. The American military went through these piles and removed what they wanted then, in an extreme display of military efficiency, all of it was destroyed. What had once been plentiful was now almost extinct. One of my favorite photos from this time period is framed shot on our office wall. It shows a group of not very happy looking German POWs cutting up P-51 Mustangs that were not slated to be returned Stateside. As the Germans torch and chop at the airframes, more Mustangs are landing in the background. One just has to wonder what was going through the minds of the POWs. They must have been somewhat happy that they weren't "guests" of the Russians.

Now, that brings us to another subject — time. These restorations take a huge amount of time. The American Heritage Museum's Focke Wulf Fw 190 has been under restoration for over three decades. This had led restorers and owners into discussions about speeding up the restoration process. All it takes is money and more manpower. At Aero Trader, work is progressing on Kermit Weeks' ultra-rare B-25B. "I know this is an extremely complex restoration," states Kermit. "I have had discussions with Carl Scholl and Matt Nightingale about the time factor and we are going to be doing everything possible to complete the Mitchell back to flying condition in the least amount of time possible." On the human level, the sad thing is that all the WWII veterans will be gone by the time the *Stuka* and the Mitchell fly. It is just a fact of life. Thirty years ago, we used to see lots of veterans at airshows where they could admire the planes they once flew in and tell stories of what the war was really like. Today, their numbers have dramatically thinned. I think it is a human trait that we just wait too long. Of course, a couple decades ago we would not have even considered a flying *Stuka*, it was just not within the realm of possibility. Who knows how we will be looking at the restoration scene a decade from today? Once again, it will have probably completely changed and we will be looking back at 2025 debating on what we did wrong and what we did right when it comes to our historic aircraft.

We have just started what is the flying season for historic aircraft as airshows begin to kick in across the country. We have seen a disturbing number of accidents — some caused by pilots, some by mechanical problems, and some by Mother Nature. The tornados that swept through Kentucky and other states in mid-May did a huge amount of damage. The destruction of the Beech T-34s that had gathered for a formation clinic was just terrible. Most of these airplanes are probably finished. We have to use that simple equation of cost of repair compared to the value of the airframe. If the planes had been Mustangs or Lightnings, then there would have been a concerted effort to return the aircraft to flight status. The T-34 is a wonderful aircraft but it has nowhere near the comparable value of a WWII fighter and that means the insurers will probably pay off the claim and then take control of what is left of the airframe and place it for sale where it may or may not be purchased. Going over the past few years, it is pretty easy to see how storms have destroyed a fair percentage of the historic airframes that are lost each year. There is little we can do about that except study weather patterns and determine "tornado alleys" and then not place aircraft in the predicted path of such storms. I know it is easy to say, but we must take every precaution possible to safeguard our historic aircraft.

MICHAEL O'LEARY/PUBLISHER
CHALLENGE PUBLICATIONS
moleary2challenge@gmail.com

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AUGUST 2025 • Vol.61/No.8
AIR CLASSICS
Where History Flies
HAMP AIRBORNE
"MY MISSILE'S FIRED!"
DAYTON'S JENNY
BATTLE OVER HUNGARY
STARFLIGHT
FORGOTTEN CROSSING
"FILL 'ER UP!"
EXPANDED WARBIRD & CLASSIC REPORT
RESTORING THE LAST NAA B-25B DOOLITTLE RAIDER
DOOLITTLE RAID
TED WILLIAMS
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BY WESTERN TO NORMANDY
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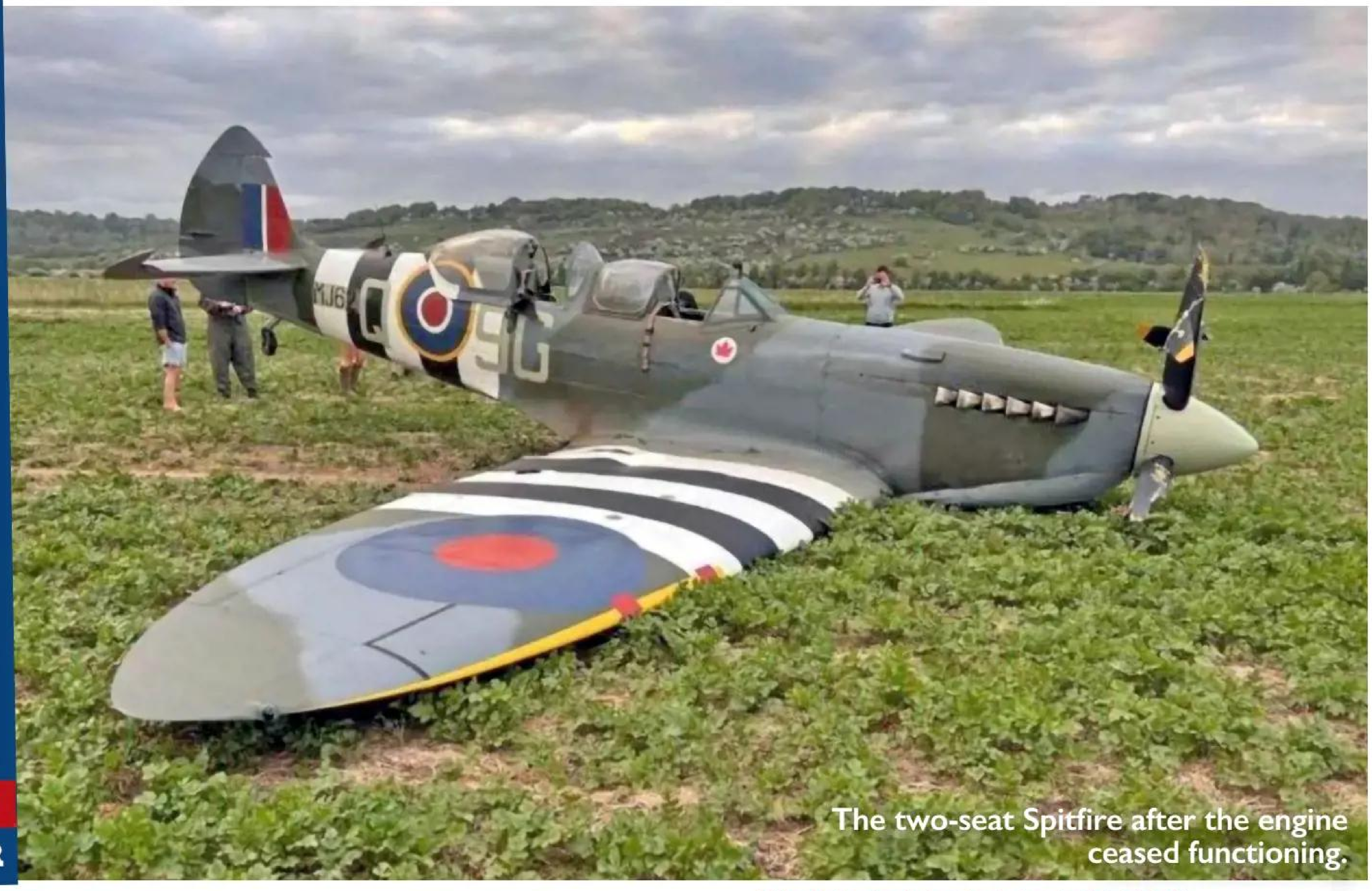
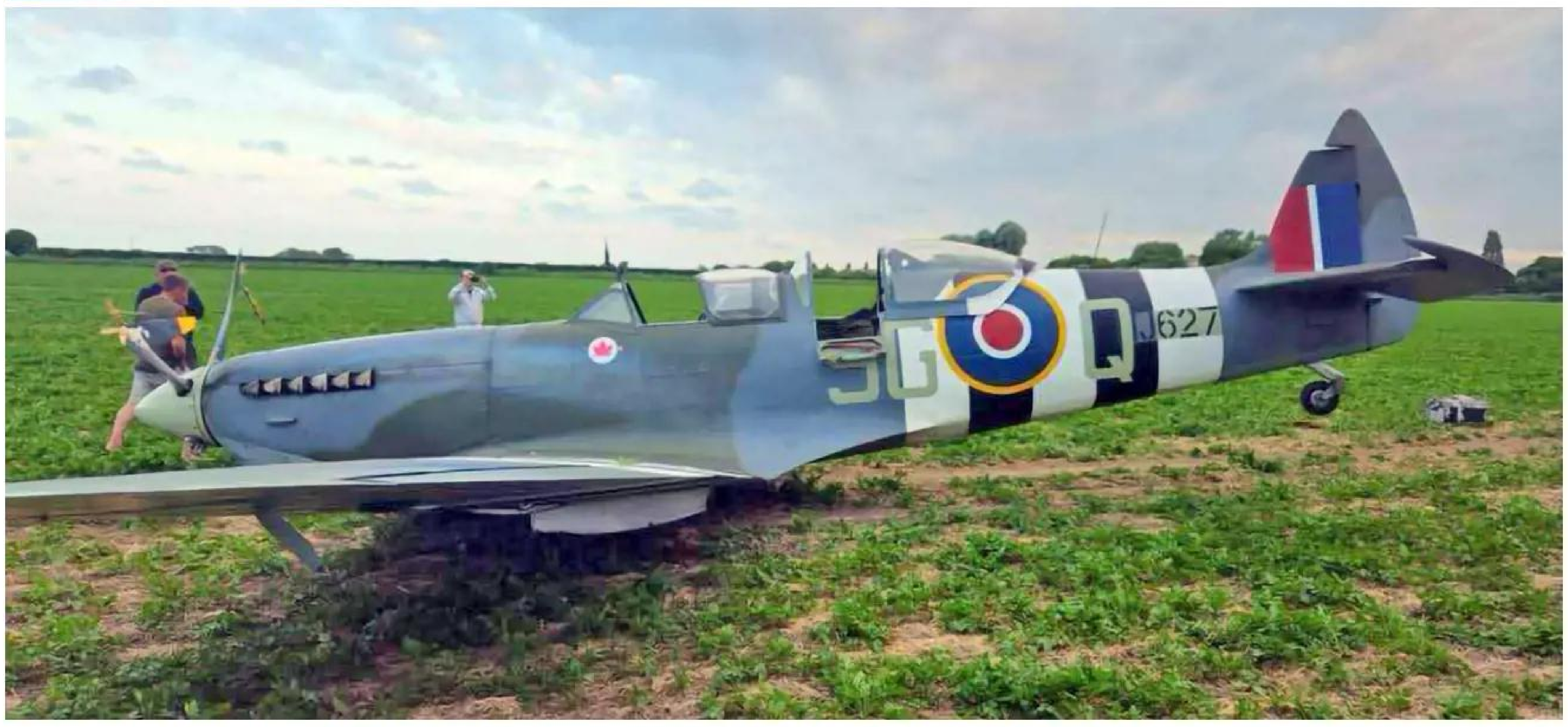
COMPILED BY DOUG FISHER



The two-seat Spitfire after the engine ceased functioning.

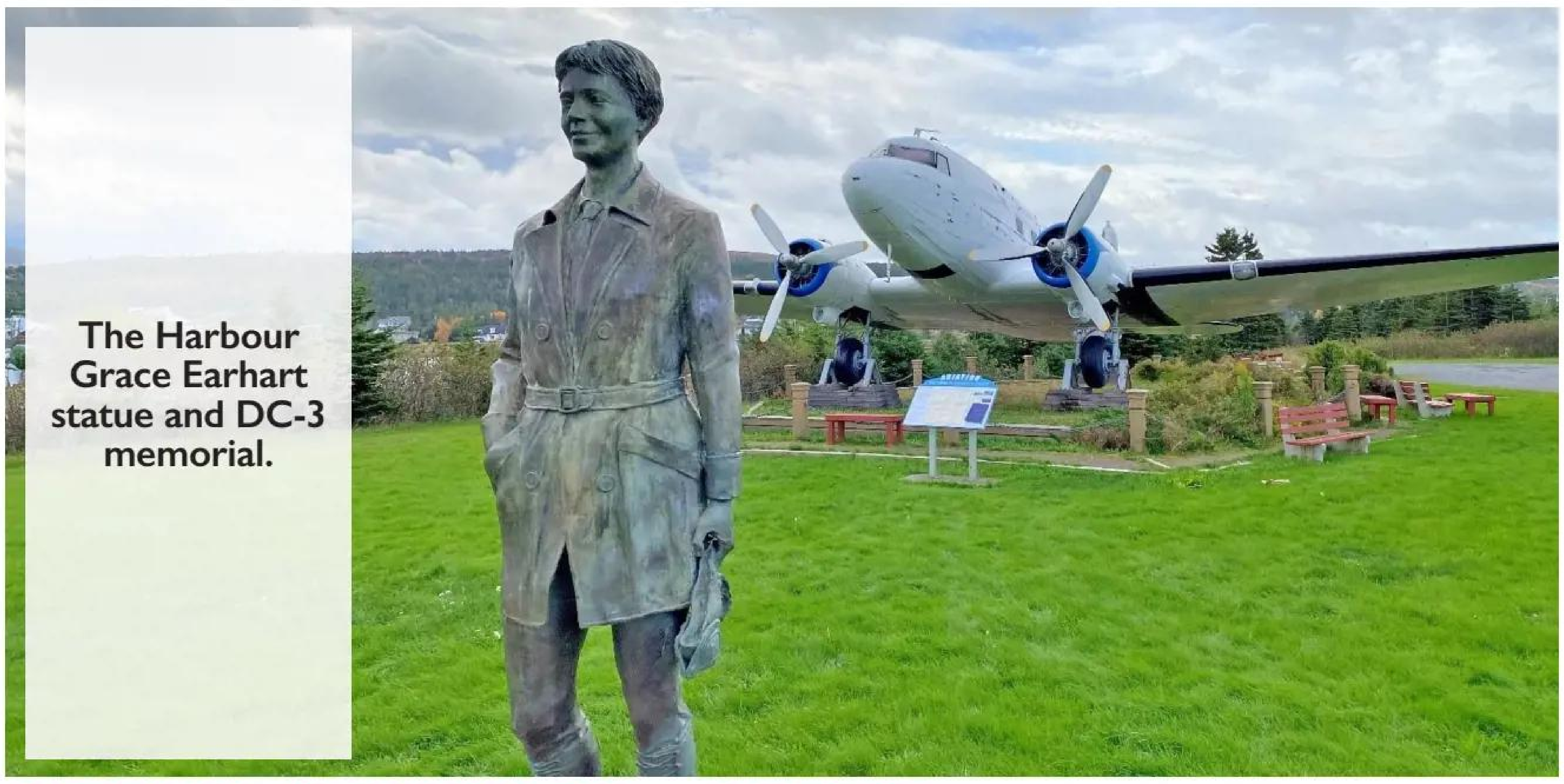


Fortunately, the area is full of flat farm fields and the pilot was able to execute a perfect gear-up landing.

SPITFIRE BELLY LANDING

On 3 May, spectators on the ground near West Hythe, Rye, England, were watching in fascination as two Supermarine Spitfires tore through the sky in a series of graceful maneuvers. However, they became alarmed when the sound was suddenly reduced by half and Spitfire T Mk. IX MJ627/G-BMSB began a curving downward turn. Fortunately, the area is comprised of relatively flat farm fields and the pilot did a perfect belly-landing with minimal damage to the aircraft and no injuries to himself or his passenger. The next day, a crew arrived to move the plane and it was taken back to its hangar for repairs.

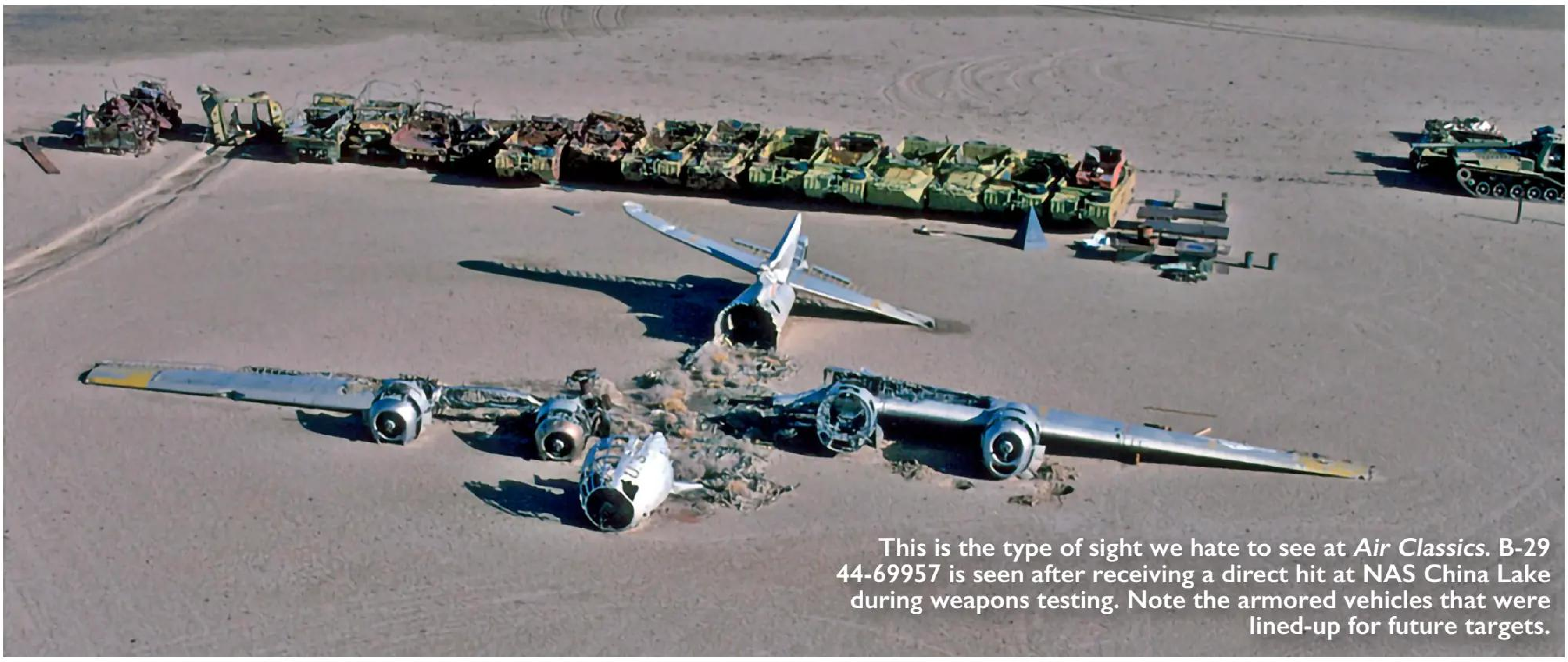
Earhart and the red Lockheed after the transatlantic solo flight. The Vega is now on display at the National Air and Space Museum



The Harbour Grace Earhart statue and DC-3 memorial.

AMELIA IS MISSING... AGAIN!

Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, has a long role in aviation history. Along with a DC-3, a beautiful bronze statue of Amelia Earhart has been on display to commemorate her successful 1932 transatlantic flight. On 20 May of that year, she took off in her Lockheed Vega from Harbour Grace and aimed for Ireland. Some 15 hours later, she successfully landed thus becoming the first woman to fly the Atlantic solo. On the morning of 23 April, residents of the small town were shocked when they found out the full-size statute had disappeared. A surveillance video showed a van and several men near the statue and it is presumed they removed it from its mounting and placed the bronze in the van. "Sadly," said a police official, "these criminals probably removed the statue so that it could be melted down. We have had a lot of copper wiring stolen along with other metals that can be quickly melted. Most of these local thefts have been by drug addicts."


This is the type of sight we hate to see at *Air Classics*. B-29 44-69957 is seen after receiving a direct hit at NAS China Lake during weapons testing. Note the armored vehicles that were lined-up for future targets.

SUPERFORTRESS NOSE FOR PSAM

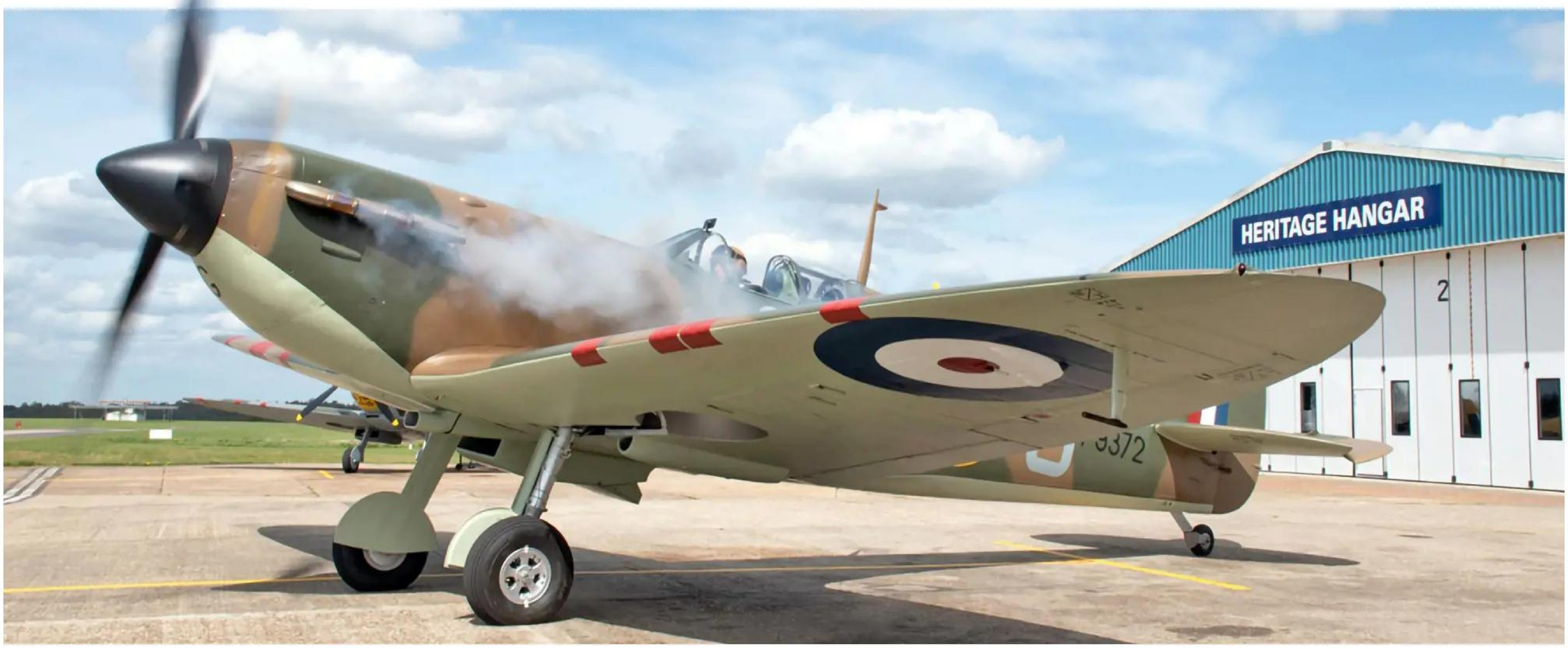
Aviation film historian Bruce Orriss and his crew have taken a beaten and battered nose from Boeing B-29 Superfortress 44-69957 and turned it into a fine exhibit for the Palm Springs Air Museum. Bruce said, "I am slowly closing down my movie prop business and selling/donating aircraft to various aviation museums. This aircraft flew with the 879th Bomb Squadron, 499th Bomb Group, out of Isley Field in Saipan. It carried the name *The Hot Number*. It was returned to the USA at the end of the war and converted to an SB-29 search and rescue aircraft. During the 1960s, it was moved to China Lake for use as a target. The plane took a direct hit and was virtually destroyed. The severely damaged nose and other sections were moved to a nearby museum that had obtained the B-29 *Doc*." For totally unknown reasons, the Navy mounted an armed raid on the museum compound and hauled away the remains of 9957, claiming it had been illegally taken. That is very strange since the wreckage was moved, along with *Doc*, directly under the eyes of Navy personnel. Bruce was able to get the badly-damaged nose and restored it for PSAM. "On the morning of 26 March, we loaded up a Sopwith Pup replica for transportation to the March Field Museum. We have donated other aircraft to this museum including the prototype Rand Robinson KR-1 and an ex-Mexican Air Force T-28 Trojan. Also, this year we donated a Northrop F-89 Scorpion to the Evergreen Museum. The Scorpion is 53-2534 and last saw service with the Oregon Air National Guard, hence the Evergreen tie-in. Also, we had a very large-scale model of a Stinson tri-motor that was used in the film *Rocketeer* and it has gone to the Flight Path Museum at Los Angeles International." So, through his goodwill, Bruce has moved some significant artifacts to museums where they will be enjoyed by visitors.

The grim remains of the B-29 nose.

Scorpion 53-2534 last flew with the Oregon ANG.

Sopwith Pup replica is now at the March Field Museum.

Large scale Stinson tri-motor model was used in the film *Rocketeer*.



The reproduction Mk. I P9372 fires up its Merlin.

SPITFIRE "RESTORATION" FLIES

"This is where it is all getting to be a bit ridiculous," stated Michael O'Leary after going through a group of photographs depicting Supermarine Spitfire Mk. IA P9372, which flew "for the first time in 85 years" on 22 April of this year. The British press made a fairly big deal about the fighter's return to the sky but "this is where history is being molded to fit the interest of those involved since probably not one bit of this aircraft has a fingerprint of a Supermarine worker," said O'Leary. The real P9372 was part of a contract covering the construction of 183 Mk. IAs. When completed, the fighter was assigned to No. 92 Squadron at RAF Northolt. It was soon damaged, repaired, and then sent back to service. On 9 September 1940, during the height of the Battle of Britain, the plane was being flown by P/O William Watling when he encountered Bf 109Es. The Spitfire's fuel tank erupted in flames and Watling managed to escape but was badly burned in the process. Trailing flame and smoke, the Spitfire impacted the ground at over 400-mph some 45 miles from RAF Biggin Hill. Watling came under the care of Sir Archibald McIndoe and after months of surgeries he returned to No. 92 Squadron but was killed on 7 February 1940 at age 20 in an accident at RAF Manston.

And what of P9372? It basically converted itself to "collectibles" after striking the ground. The crash site was eventually located by an enthusiast during the 1970s and excavated. Amongst the rubble was the data plate. These remains were put on display along with other crash components at the obscure Tonbridge Battle of Britain Museum. Not surprisingly, the museum went out of business in 2023 and the wreckage from the Spitfire and other planes was put up for auction. The bits of P9372 sold for less than $1000. It appears pieces from P9372 including the data plate ("is that a data plate in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?") were sold earlier in 2016 and went to the Heritage Hangar at Biggen Hill.

Of course, the data plate was touted as being the "sound basis for a flying restoration." Does this mean the data plate was easily restorable?

Dutch millionaire Frits van Eerd had already purchased the data plate for Spitfire Mk. XVI TB885 and this data plate returned to the sky in 2018. Having an established fondness for data plates (and, really, who doesn't?), van Eerd purchased the one from P9372 and Heritage Hangar got busy. On 22 April, experienced test pilot Pete Kynsey did the honors and the new aircraft performed perfectly.

"If one is interested in history, and I presume you are since you're reading this magazine, then you can see the Warbird industry has simply pushed this whole data plate thing way too far. It is sort of like going to one of these companies that advertise that their 'staff of talented artists' will replicate any famous painting from history. They do a damn fine job and the new owner can soon have a reproduction piece of art hanging in his/her living room for a miniscule amount compared to the original — right on down to the 'replicated' signature. No one takes these as being the original [unless the new owner is lying to impress friends and family] and it is what it is — a nice reproduction. Now I have friends that argue that these data plate aircraft provide work for the builders of airframes and engines. I respect that argument. What I do not respect is that these reproductions are selling for basically the same amount as the original and that makes no sense. Another argument that I hear is that these reproductions [or whatever one wants to call them as long as they are not called 'original'] honor the men and women that built and flew them. But do they? Or are these reproductions simply ways of making money in an increasingly greedy society? We don't yet have a final answer as to what is real and what isn't but I suspect we will and, at least in this country, the FAA will become the deciding factor since they are simply being pushed too far by the increasing number of reproductions and will be forced to provide an answer for us."

The simple and lovely lines of the reproduction Mk. I.

Gear coming up, Pete Kynsey climbs away on the first flight.

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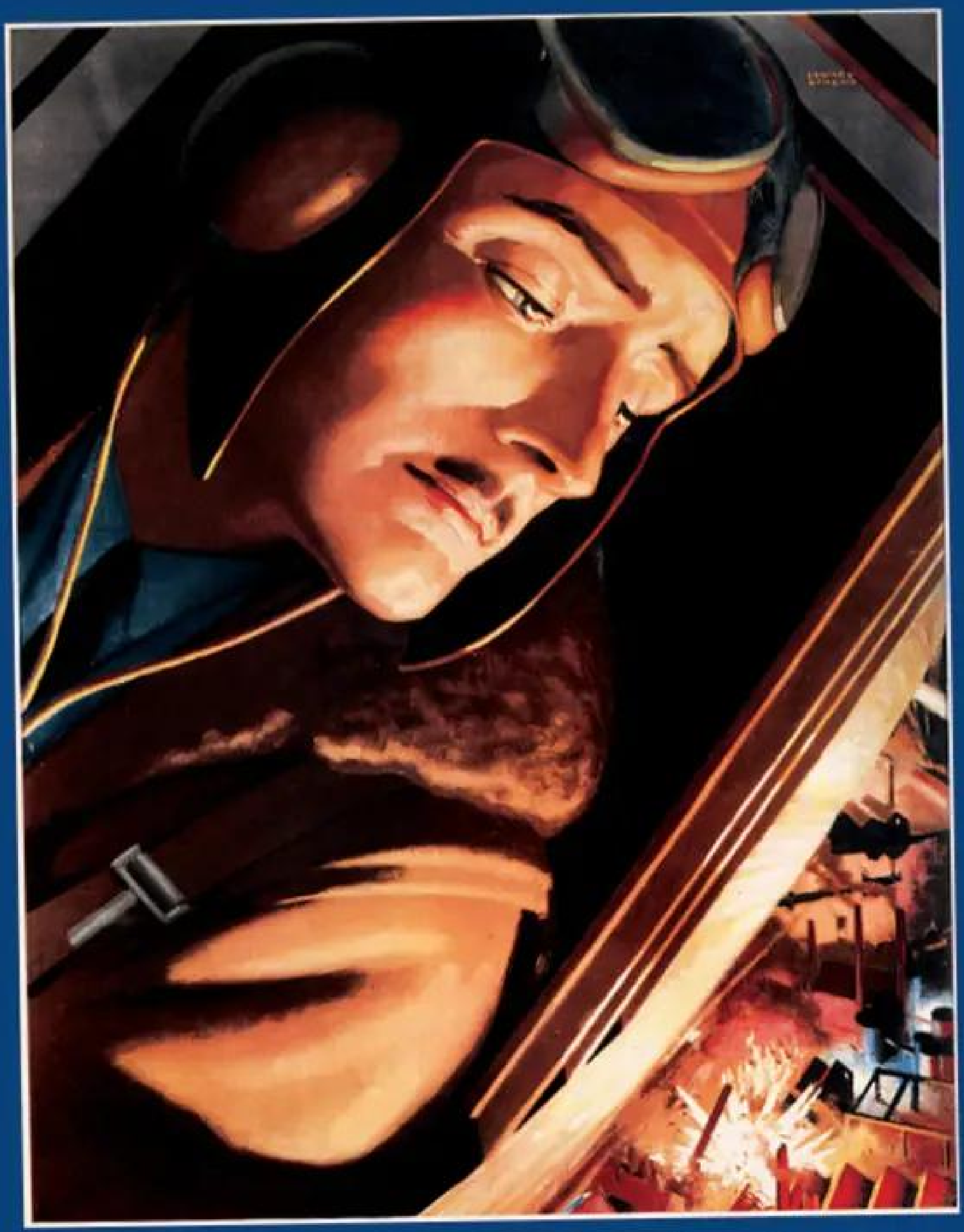


WARBIRD & CLASSIC REPORT

KEEP 'EM FLYING!

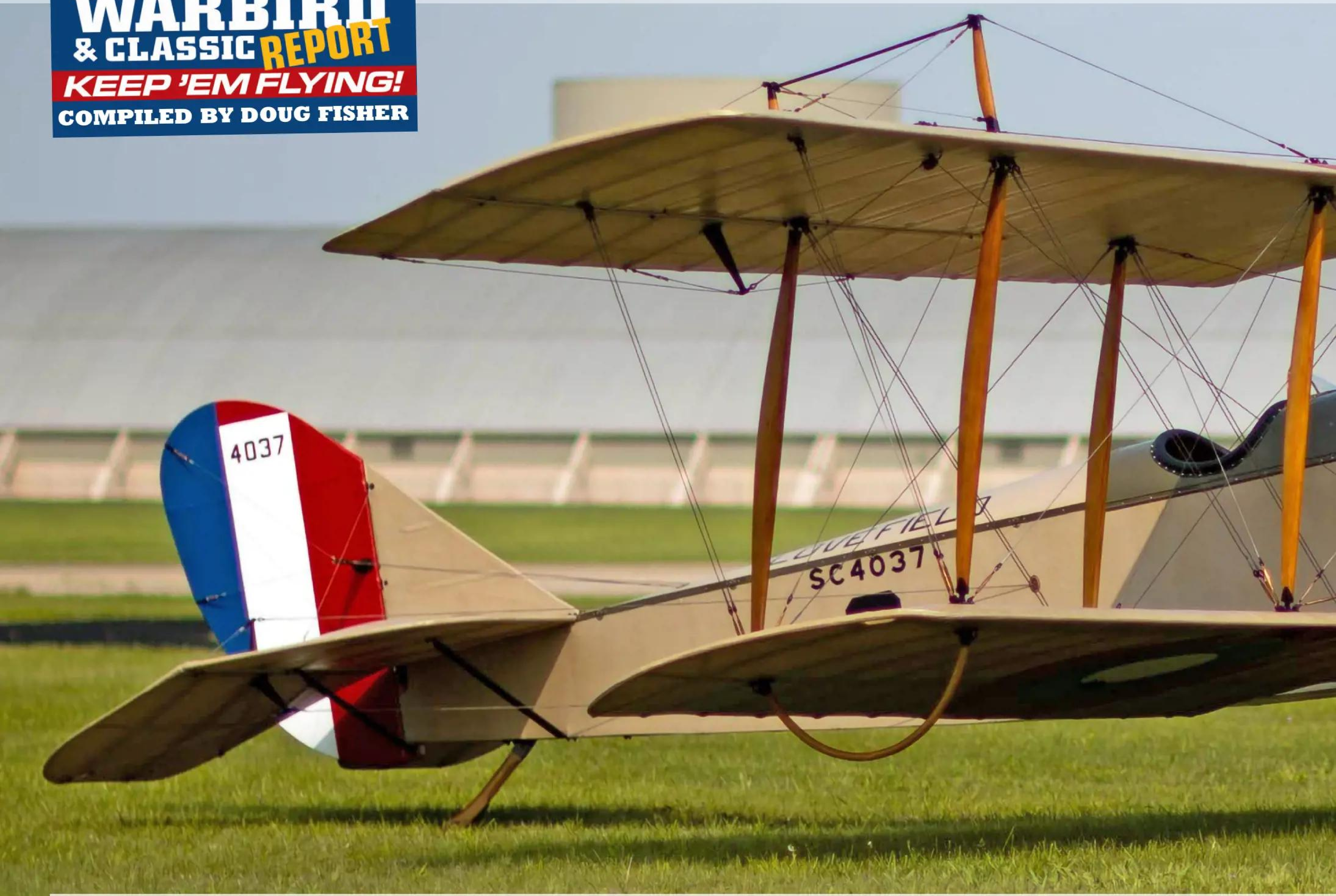
COMPILED BY DOUG FISHER

DAYTON'S JENNY

THIS "BARN FIND" CURTISS JN-4D HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED A MULTI-YEAR RESTORATION AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE USAF

BY P.J. SCOTT

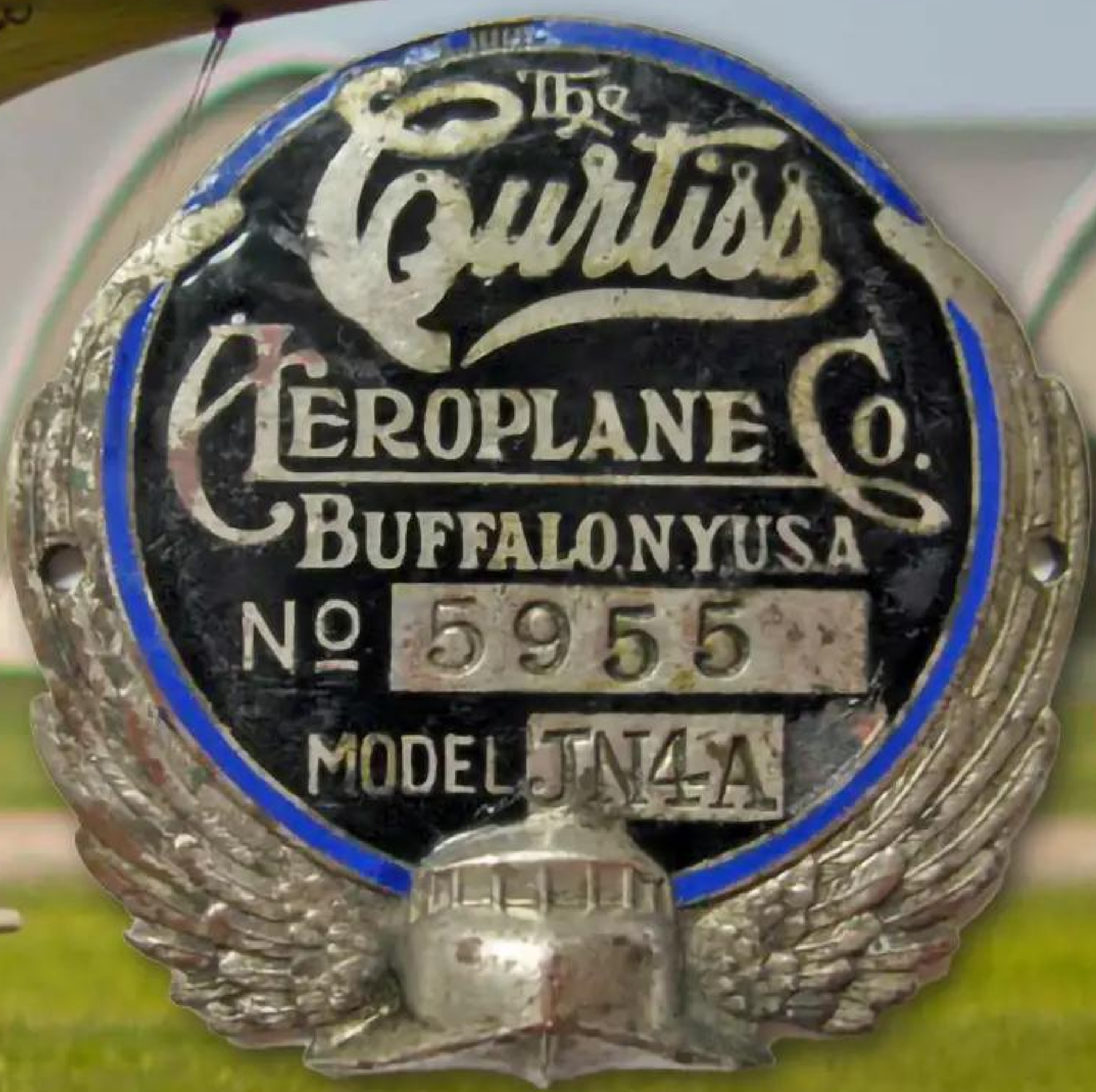
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF NMUSAF/KEN LA ROCK



For the aviation enthusiast, one of the things that makes America great is the fact that this nation has lots and lots of storage space — outbuildings, garages, barns, etc. America is also a nation of collectors and hoarders, so there is no telling what these spaces might contain. For people like myself, I get the opportunity to fly long distances low and slow while delivering vintage aircraft across the country. When passing over states such as Indiana or Ohio, I get to watch the countryside slowly unfolding and always make sure to check out barns while passing overhead. You can never tell what you will spot. Most of the sightings are of rusting tractors and unidentifiable pieces of farm equipment but occasionally I would be surprised. Passing over one Indiana barn at about 500 feet, I spotted row after row of very derelict Ford Model T autos. On these flights, I always keep an old road map in my flight suit pocket and mark any "find" worthy of further investigation. I did a 360 over the farm field and counted over four dozen very derelict examples of Henry Ford's finest. I put an "X" on the location and continued on my flight.

Every now and then, and it is rare, I come across an aircraft. They were rarely of much interest. My maps began to acquire more Xs but the airframes were usually post-war light aircraft. I spotted several twin-tail Ercoupes, a few Cessna 120/140 two-seaters, and once came across a trio of Bellanca Vikings with weeds growing through them and the wooden wings obviously rotten even from a few hundred feet up. One find that caused a great deal of excitement was a disassembled Curtiss P-40 still in Air Corps paint! Obviously, that was pretty neat but further research revealed that

Portrait of a group of enlisted pilots with a JN-4D at Rich Field.

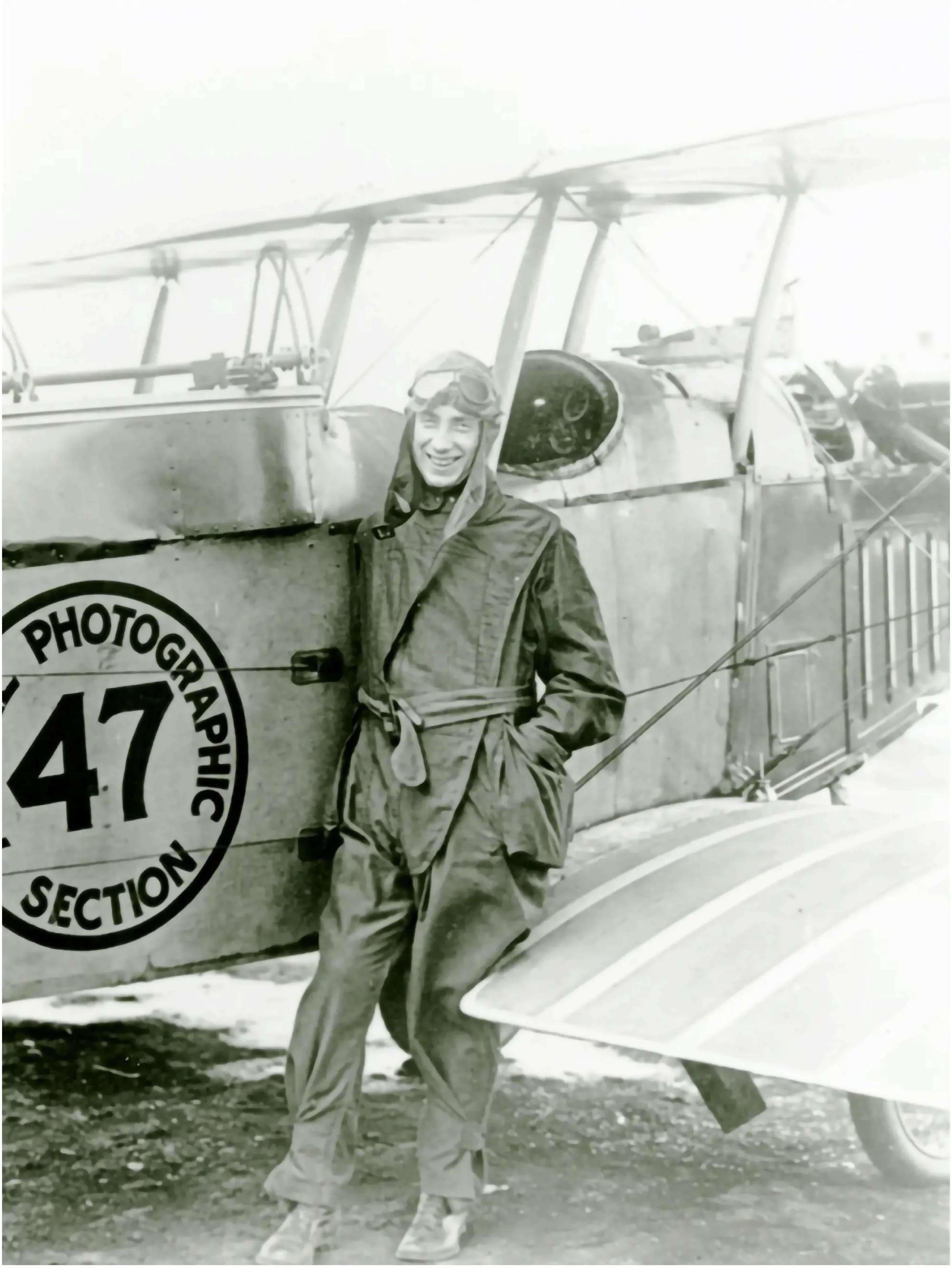


An original Curtiss JN-4D nameplate. These were very nicely done with enamel and at the bottom was a Curtiss speedboat coming directly at the viewer.

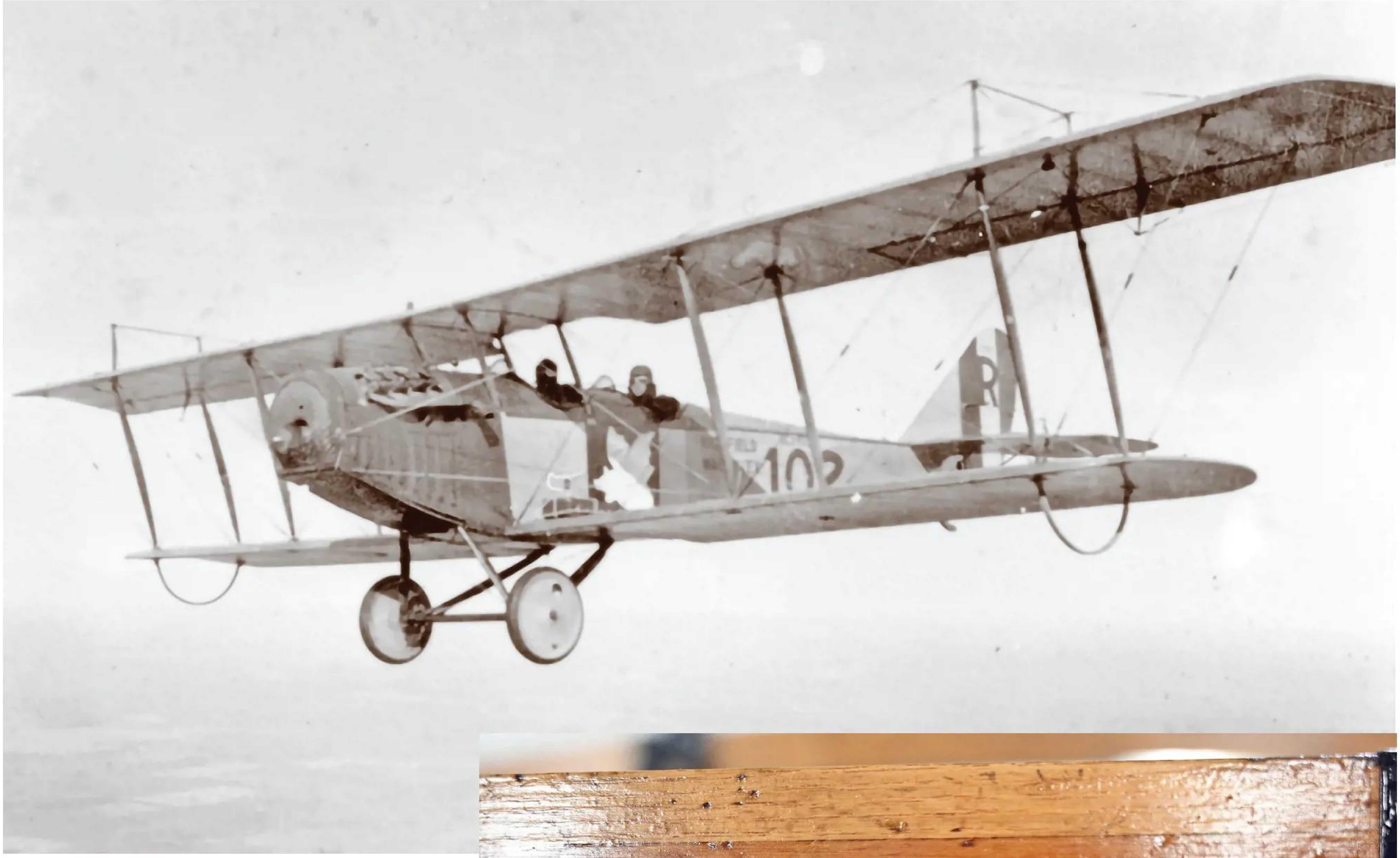
The completed JN-4D on the grass outside the National Museum of the USAF in Dayton.

it was a fiberglass movie prop. Imagine if it had been real! How had they gotten to their locations? What were their stories and why had owners allowed the aircraft to return to Mother Nature?

On these cross-countries in Cubs, Travel Airs, and Wacos, I never did find that elusive Mustang or Thunderbolt squirreled away next to a fading red barn. About the most exotic piece of aviation equipment was a wingless Vultee BT-13 parked between a couple mature trees. I almost did not notice the WWII basic trainer and it certainly was worth another look so I put the Cub into a slow left-hand turn and took a couple shots with the small digital camera I usually carry with me. On this second pass, I spotted the outer wing panels sitting nearby and nearly overgrown with plant life. I could see the remains of the old "NC" registration on one of the wings and jotted it down. By this time, the farmer had come out of his house and, hands on hips, stared up at the bright yellow monoplane circling overhead. I waggled the wings a few times but this got no response from the farmer — he just kept staring upwards. I proceeded on to my delivery destination but a few days later I called up a friend who was restoring two of the classic Vultees. I gave him all the information I had and he said he would check into it. A few weeks went by and I heard back from him. He had flown to an airstrip about 20 miles away, got ahold of a car, and had driven out to the farm I marked on my map. He met with the farmer and explained his interest in the Vultee while asking if he could inspect the aircraft. My friend said the farmer just stared at him and finally commented, "Ain't for sale. Me and the boy are going to fix that thing up and learn how to fly." So, the quest for another BT-13 to add to his restoration



A Jenny in service at Rich Field in Waco, Texas, where the museum's Jenny was based as a civilian aircraft. The JN-4D series was subjected to numerous modifications and this plane (assigned to the 47th Aerial Photographic Section) has a large Scarff-type ring in the rear cockpit area which was presumably utilized as a camera mount.



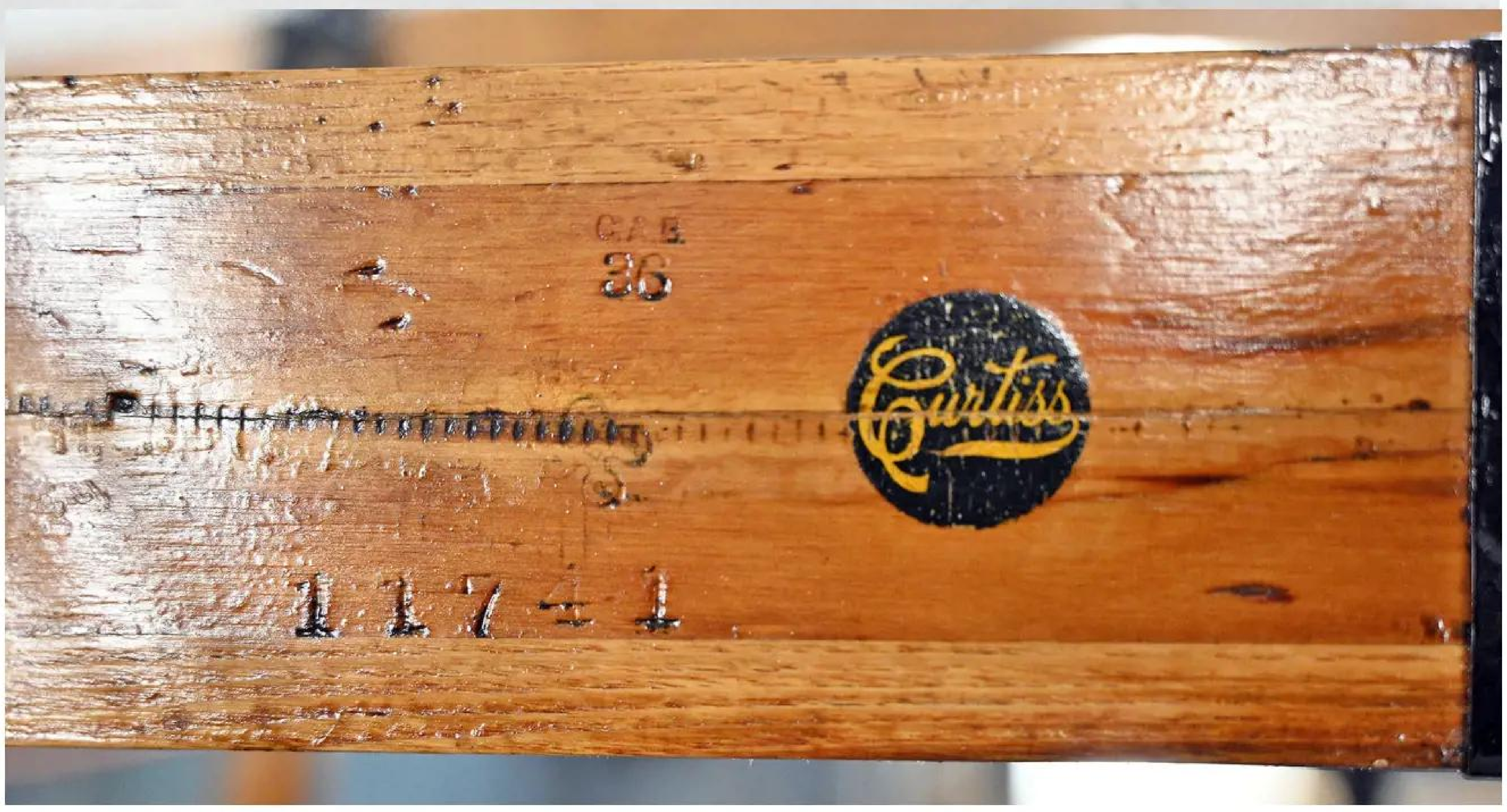
A Jenny flying out of Rich Field with a large winged pig painted on the forward fuselage — perhaps a reference to the term "if pigs could fly" or just a pointed reference to the flying qualities of the Jenny.

project came to a quick end.

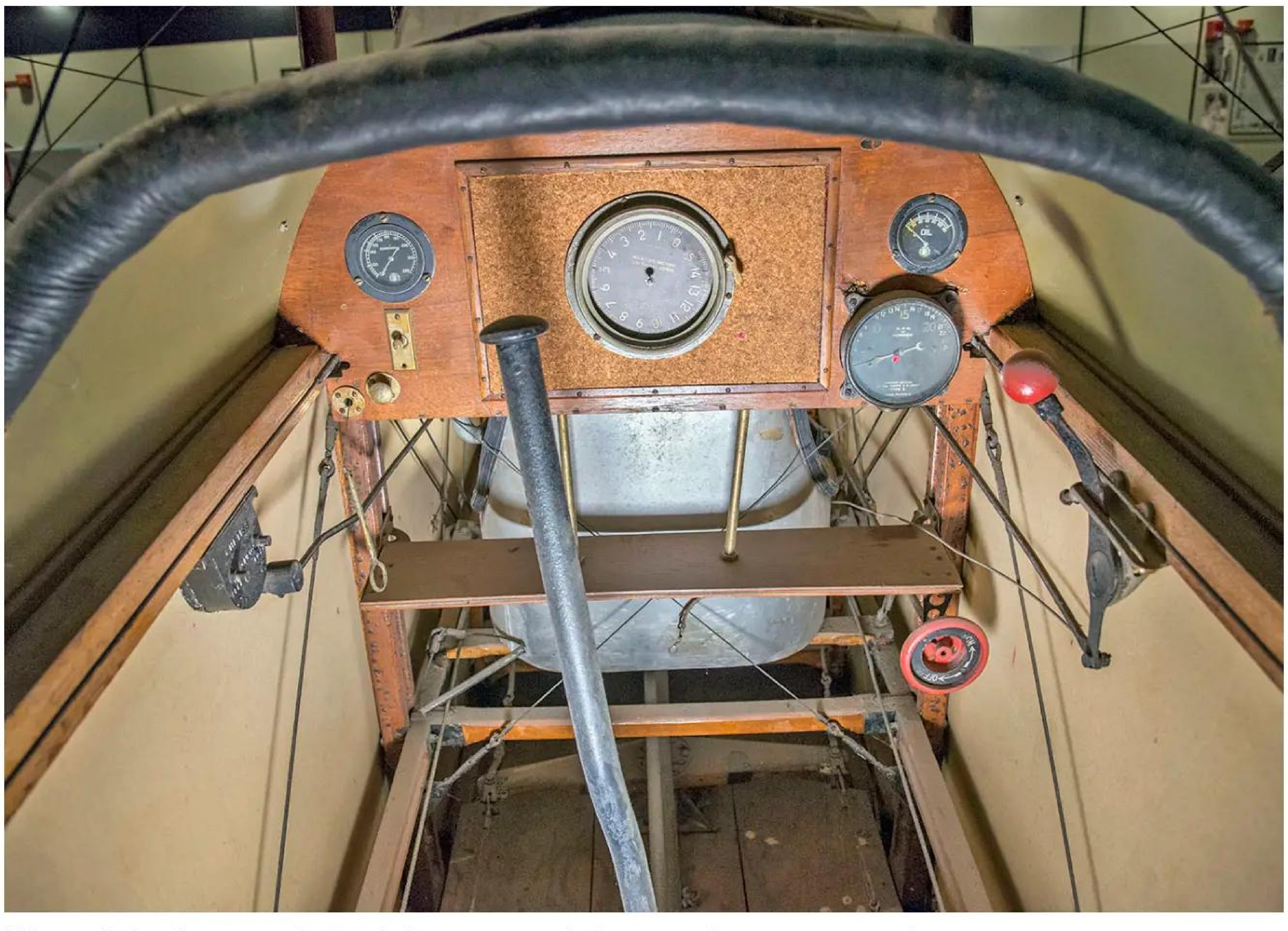
The point of this article is that you never know what is out there. This is a huge country and we have to travel back in time to discover an aircraft named Jenny and its place in the history of aviation.

Designed and built by Glenn Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company in Hammondsport, New York, the JN series of tandem trainers would morph into the JN-4, the most numerous and popular of the type. Demand for the type was such that Curtiss had to issue building licenses to six other companies in order to keep up with orders. At least 9000 aircraft in the JN series were built along with huge quantities of spare parts so the planes could be repaired after student-induced accidents. In Canada, some 1260 JN-4 (Canadian) Canucks were built by Canadian Aeroplanes Ltd.

Given the nickname "Jenny," the JN-4D was America's major aviation contribution to the Great War. With the end of the war, the Jenny remained in service (along with the follow-on JN-4H and JN-6) but huge quantities of airframes, parts, and engines (the Curtiss OX-5 of 90-hp) were released onto the civilian market and these aircraft became the mainstay of the "barnstorming" craze that swept the country. There were so many spare parts that some dealers could offer "zero-time" JN-4Ds built completely out



Detail of the woodwork showing the original Curtiss logo and associated markings.



View of the front cockpit of the museum's Jenny prior to restoration.

of new parts.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, JN-4Ds could be seen droning across the skies of America, carrying passengers, performing stunts, and doing just about anything else that would allow the barnstormer to make a living.

However, as the country moved into the 1930s the allure of flying with a barnstormer began to fade away and, combined with the Great Depression, the Curtiss Jenny began to rapidly disappear. Many were just parked and Mother Nature did the rest. However, a surprising number were disassembled and stuffed away in barns or other storage facilities where they were left to face an uncertain future.

By the 1950s, the Jenny had pretty much disappeared except for individuals like Jack Hardwick who had a highly-modified example fitted with a radial engine that he would take to airshows in the southern California area. It was also during this time that, to their great embarrassment, that the ever-expanding USAF Museum discovered they did not have an example of what is America's most famous WWI aircraft.

The curators at the museum let it be known that they were searching for a JN-4D. We must remember that this was long before the age of internet and such searches were instigated by phone calls and letters to individuals knowledgeable in such matters. Also, the curators at that time tended to be military pilots with a deep love for USAF history and aviation and they had built a network that was very useful in finding rare aircraft, parts, and engines.

As the Jenny search spread across the nation, curators discovered there were disassembled examples saved by collectors. In fact, one fellow in New England had four complete aircraft. The museum also found that these individuals had no interest in parting with their aircraft (and this fact will lead to an upcoming story in *Air Classics*).

For the USAF Museum, their JN-4D search would culminate in Waco, Texas. That is where John Clark learned of the museum's interest in acquiring a JN-4D. Clark excitedly remembered that he had a friend who had once owned a Jenny. Clark then got in touch with Robert Pfeil who indeed had owned a Jenny and had flown it for many years across the flat Texas landscape.

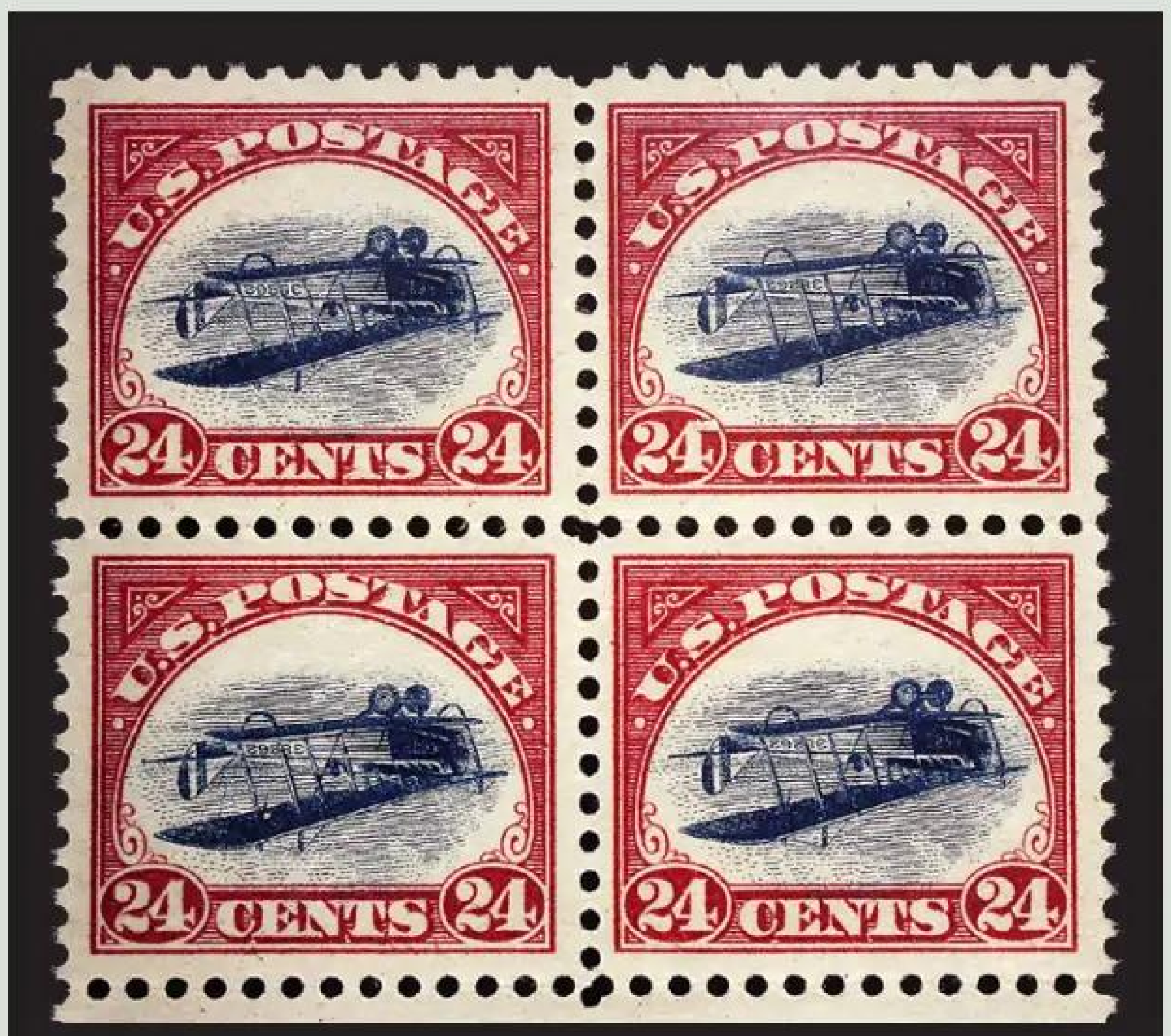
During the Great War, Texas was dotted with Signal Corps training bases where aviators were being cranked out to serve on the Western Front. The main trainer was, of course, the Jenny. Pfeil had learned that the government was having a sale to dispose of aircraft and equipment and he attended a 1926 sale and purchased what must have been one of the last Jennies sold by the government.

(continued on page 74)

THE INVERTED JENNY

With the popularity of the new air mail, the US Post Office issued a new stamp that bore the image of a JN-4D. Priced at 24 cents, the stamp was expensive but it would get *really* expensive after a sheet of 100 stamps was mistakenly printed with the Jenny upside down. Thus was born the dream of every philatelist – the "Inverted Jenny." Since only one sheet, or "pane" as they are called in the stamp world, was printed before the mistake was realized, it is perhaps the most desirous of all American stamps.

Since the stamp was going to be printed in two colors, each pane had to be placed upon a flatbed printing press twice. This was obviously a system open to errors and the Post Office was in a great rush to get the stamp to customers and a release date of 10 May 1918 was set.



During a 1955 Philatelic Society convention, a rare block of four Jenny Inverts was stolen. Over the decades, investigators have managed to recover three of the four stamps.

Stamp collectors realize that such a system can lead to profitable finds and one such collector was William T. Robey. He wrote to a fellow enthusiast that "it might interest you to know that there are two parts to the design, one an insert into the other, like the Pan-American issues [this was another flub highly prized among collectors]. I think it would pay to be on the lookout for inverts on account of this." On release date, Robey went to his post office to buy the new stamps. The collector's eyes must have bulged when the clerk brought out a pane of inverts. "My heart stood still," he later wrote.

He paid for his prize and then enquired if there were more. The clerk had never seen an airplane so he had no idea it was upside down. There were no more and Robey scuttled away with his find.

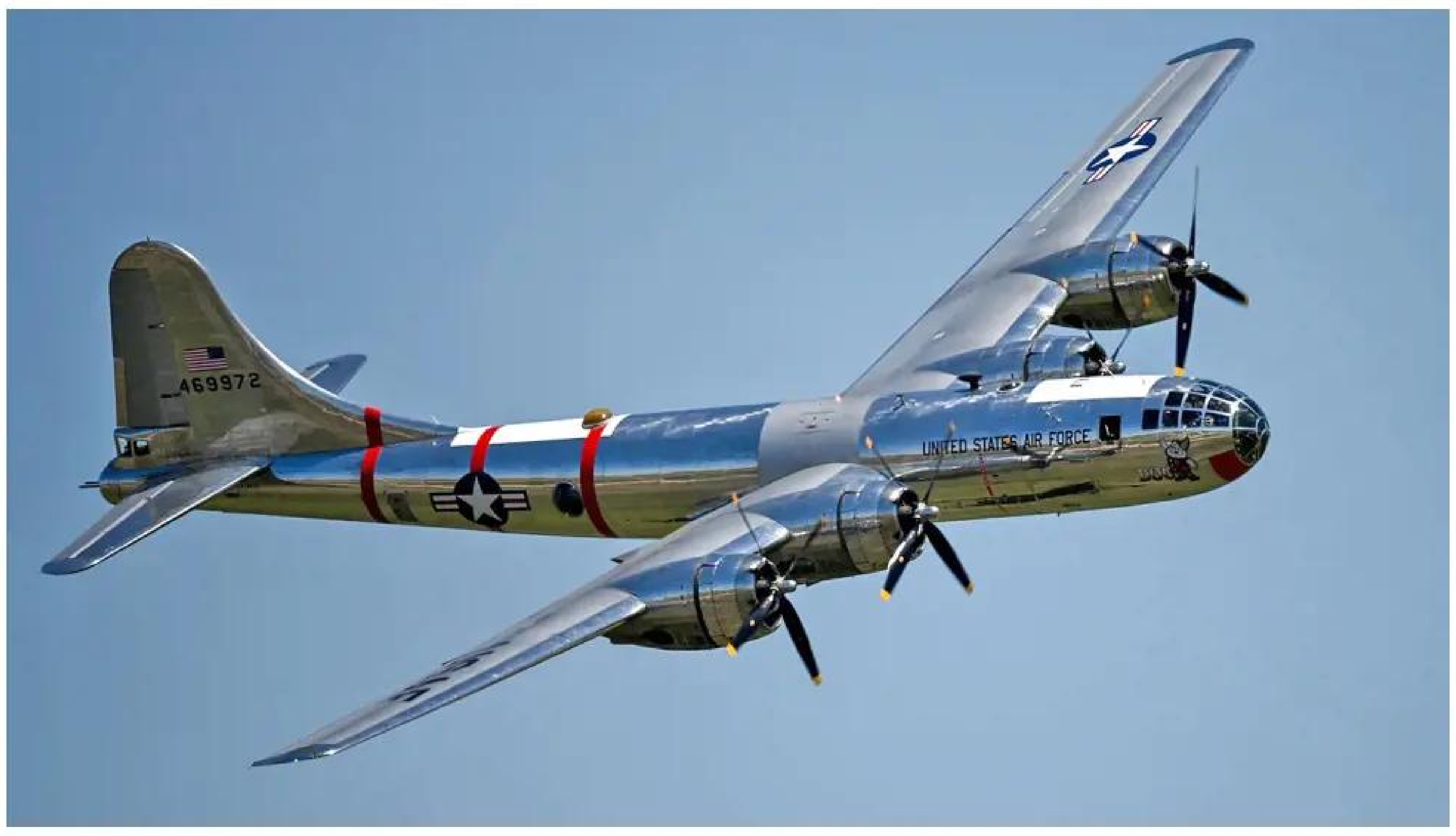
The story of the Jenny Inverts is almost like a Sherlock Holmes tale. Robey hid the pane under his mattress and began to contact dealers. He was even visited by postal inspectors who attempted to buy the pane back. Robey eventually sold the sheet to Philadelphia dealer Eugen Klein for $15,000 ($345,553 in 2025). Klein then offered to sell the stamps individually but before he could cut them up, Edward Green purchased the sheet for $20,000, thus giving Klein a tidy profit.

From that point, history has taken its course and each stamp has been carefully researched. Soon after the sale, Klein convinced Green that he could make a lot more money by selling the stamps individually. Green agreed but kept a number of the stamps for himself.

In the philatelic world, studies have stated that seven of the stamps have been lost or destroyed but this number has recently been reduced. In 2007, a copy came to light that had not been seen since Klein broke up the sheet. Several others were slightly damaged while one survivor was mistakenly used as postage (thus becoming the only Jenny Invert with a cancellation mark).

Over the years, the stamps have increased in value but the past two decades have seen a spectacular rise in prices. With skyrocketing demand, it is not surprising that several of the stamps have been stolen and slightly altered to disguise their true identities (using a pencil, Klein had numbered each stamp on the backside) and the FBI has even gotten into chasing down stolen Jenny Inverts.

In September 2018, a missing invert (#49) was discovered after being lost for100 years. This particular stamp had not been seen since the original sheet was divided. It was quickly put up for auction and sold for $1,593,000 (including buyer's premium). Hundreds of articles and several books have been written about the inverts and each surviving stamp has been carefully documented. On 15 November 2023, a New York auction saw an invert go to Charles Hack for $2,000,000 – so check your stamp drawer. It might just have a missing Inverted Jenny!



***Doc* displaying the new markings.**

DOC GETS SOME NEW PAINT

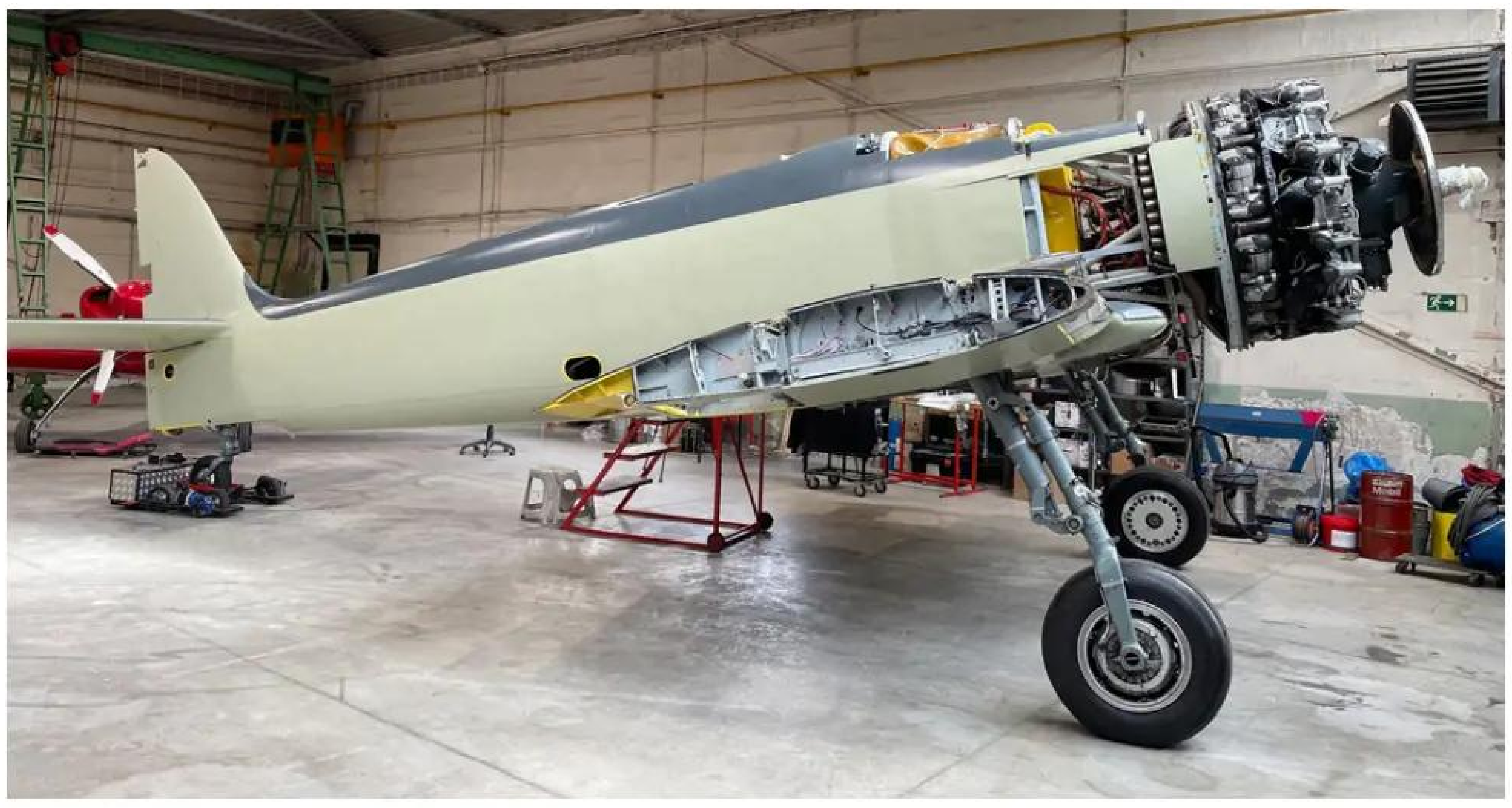
The Boeing B-29 Superfortress known as *Doc* has received some alterations to its paint scheme. Long-time readers of *Air Classics* will know that we extensively covered the aircraft when it was a target at China Lake. Luckily, the majority of the airframe survived intact (it was missing the vertical) but the interior had been heavily vandalized over the years. We spent a couple days helping recover the bomber and get it moved to its temporary resting spot. The aircraft was eventually disassembled and moved to Wichita where it was placed in a Boeing hangar and the years of restoration began. Workers did a fine job bringing the veteran back to life but there were ups and downs — such as when the nearly-complete airframe lost its hangar shelter and was moved outside to suffer in the weather. However, the B-29 restoration group kept moving forward and the plane was finally completed and flown. "Having spent several days in the desert helping the folks get the B-28 ready to move, I have the highest regard for what they did under very difficult conditions. Also, the people that saved *Doc* and got it moved never really received the credit they deserved. The initial move was followed by all sorts of problems including Navy police grabbing several individuals from the museum for mistaken reasons. We will be putting together an article for an upcoming *Air Classics* on just what it took to save the plane so that it could become the basis for a multi-million dollar rebuild," states Editor Michael O'Leary.

Doc now takes part in annual tours and this allows people the chance to tour and fly on the Superfortress. The most recent markings are attractive and add a touch of post-war flavor. These include the white reflective panels added atop on the fuselage that helped keep heat under control. Also added were the distinctive red stripes on the rear fuselage and these denoted refueling states of the former bomber.

Two Boeing classics in formation.

FIFI TEMPORARILY GROUNDED

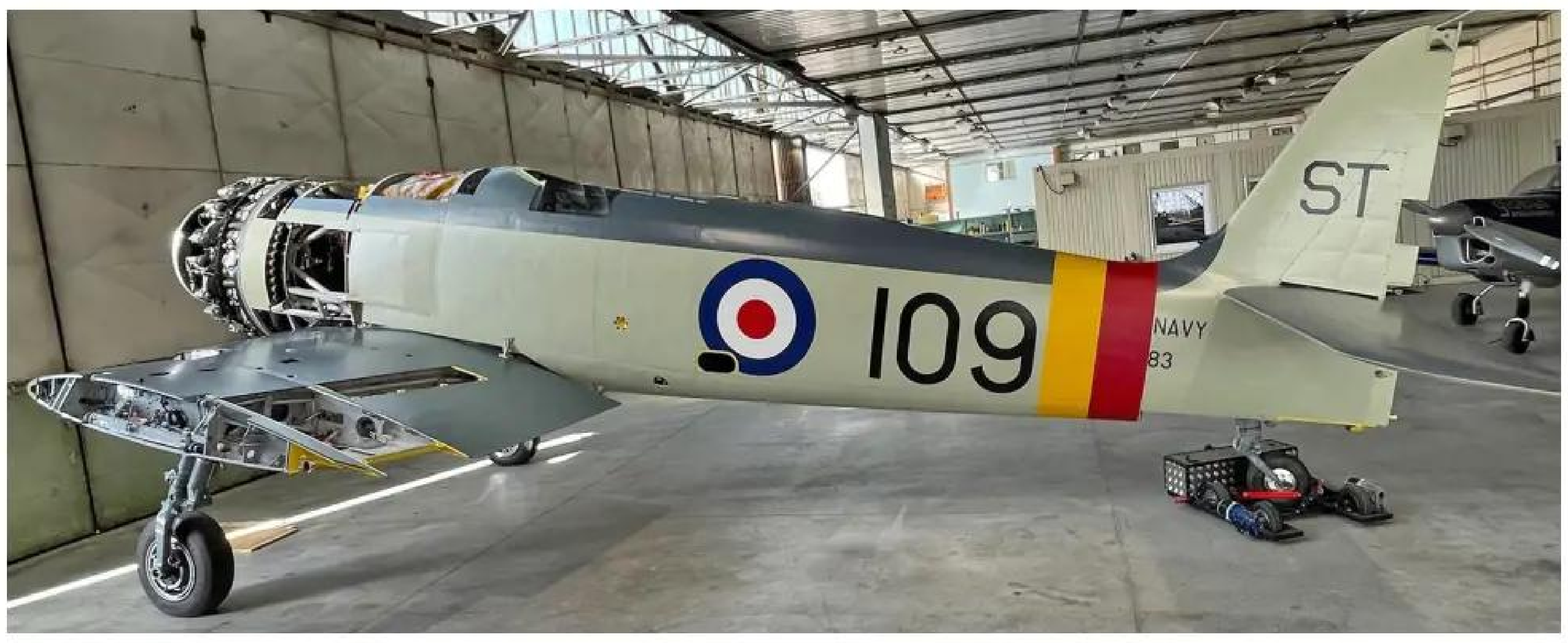
As the Commemorative Air Force's team that is responsible for the care and feeding of B-29 *FiFi* was doing its annual maintenance work prior to the start of the 2025 airshow season, a few problems were found with the Nos. 2 and 4 Wright R-3350 radials. Accordingly, a decision was made to ground the plane so that further investigative work could be undertaken. Hopefully, the Superfort will be back in the air by the time this issue appears in print.



The Sea Fury receiving Royal Navy colors.

RIFF-RAFF UPDATE

For all of us that love the Reno Sea Fury racers, we were a bit saddened when *Riff-Raff* was sold in Czechoslovakia. That country has a long and proud aviation history and we recently received photos of the plane at the Zlin Aircraft Company where it is in the process of receiving a new paint scheme. As can be seen, the Sea Fury has lost its spectacular air race colors in favor of a vintage Royal Navy scheme. We will be looking forward to seeing the completed aircraft — even though it will not be around the pylons.



Some of the markings now in place. The red and yellow bands were added as identfication markings during the Suez War.

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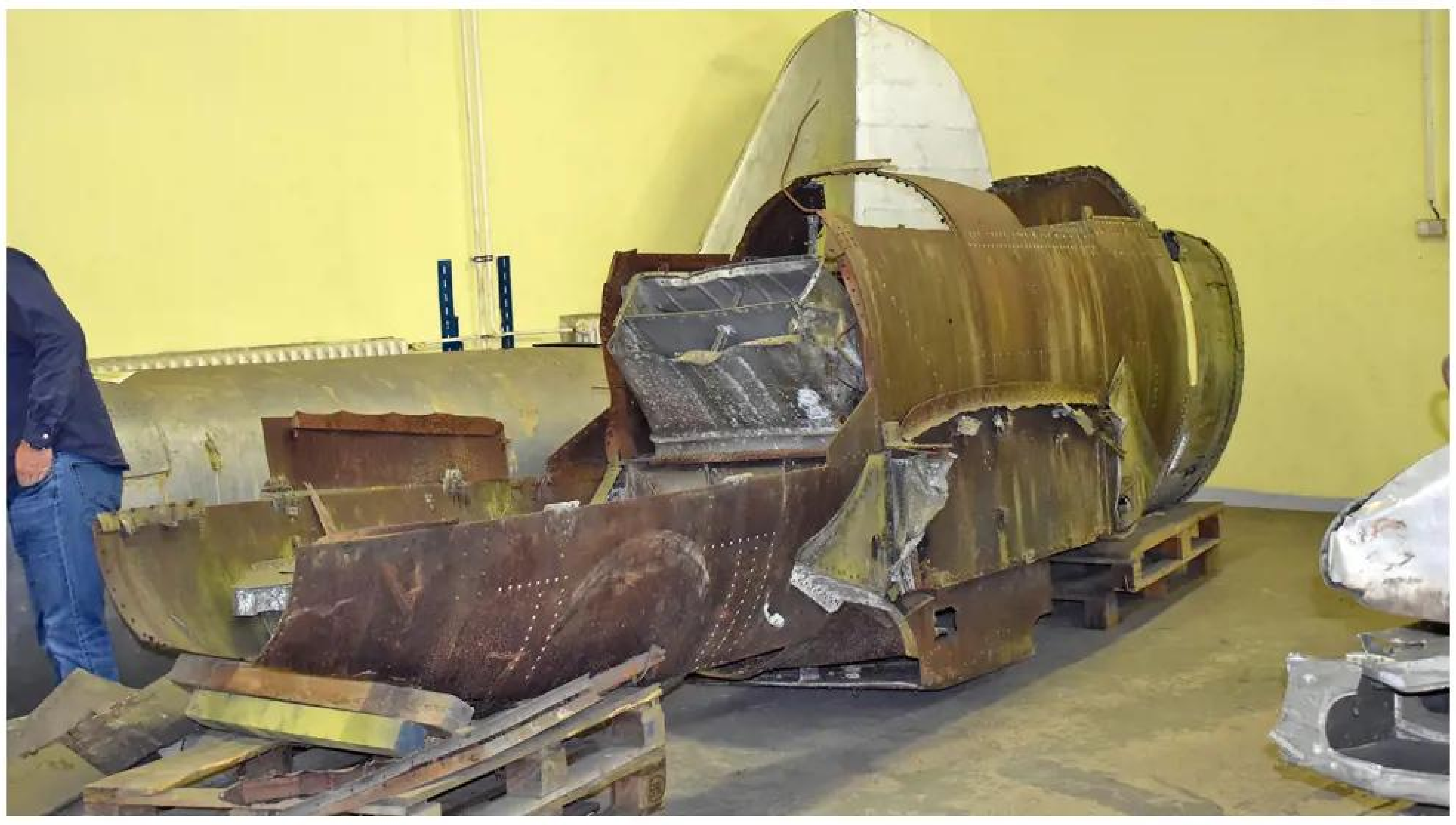
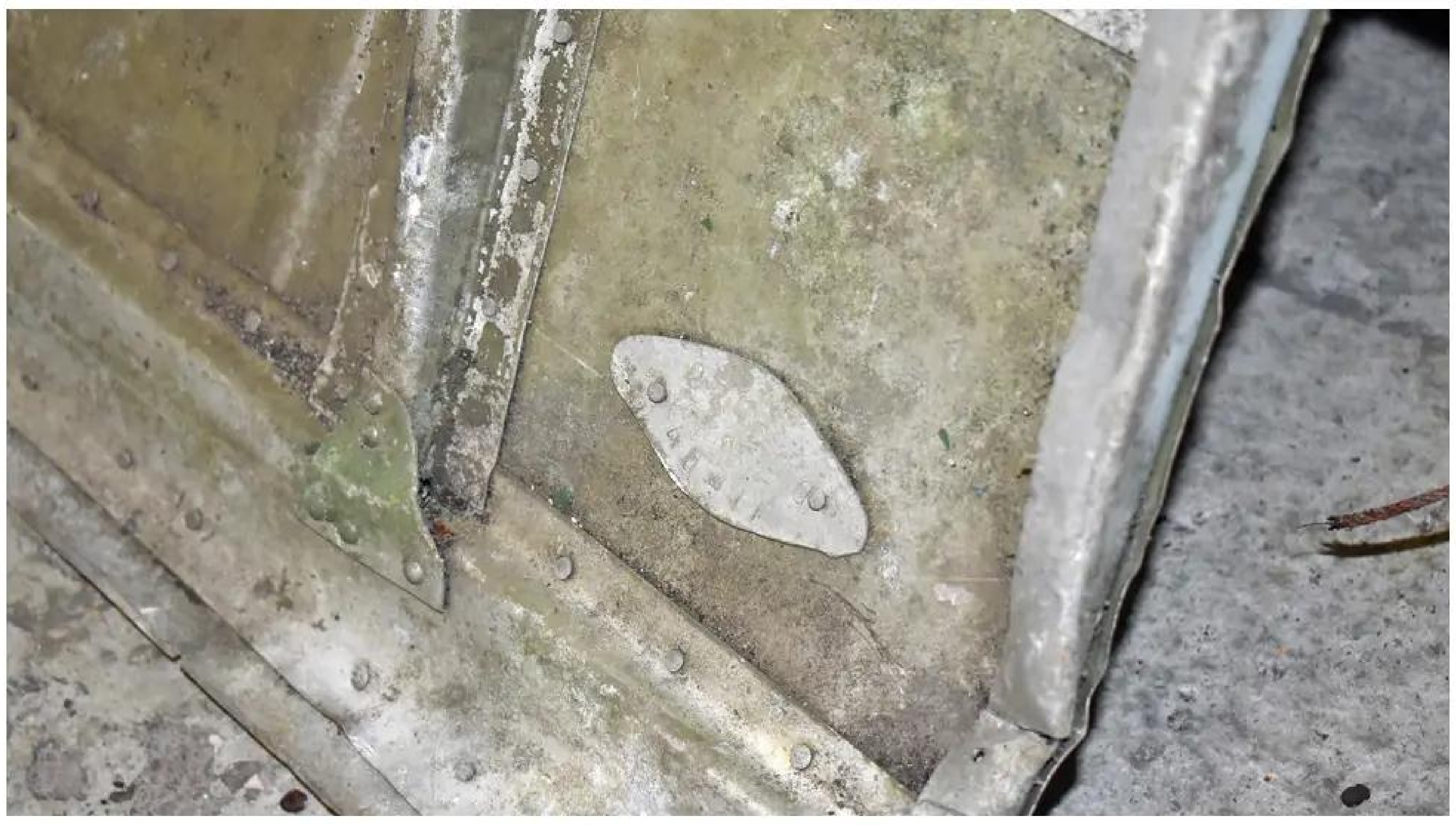


An Il-2 forward fuselage. As can be seen by the rust, this was built from steel to protect the crew and engine.

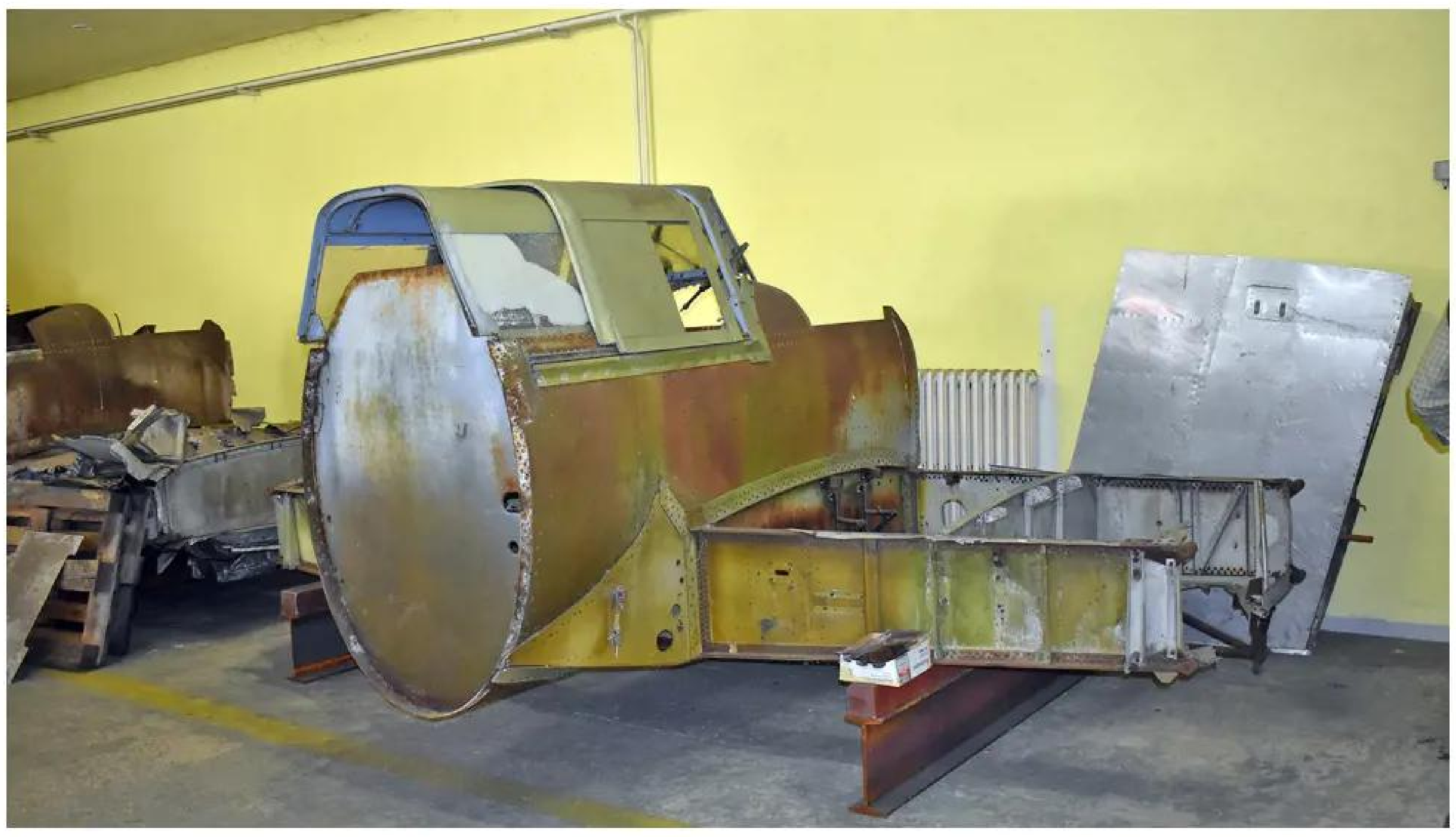


So far, this small oval data plate is the only one that has been found in the four airframes.

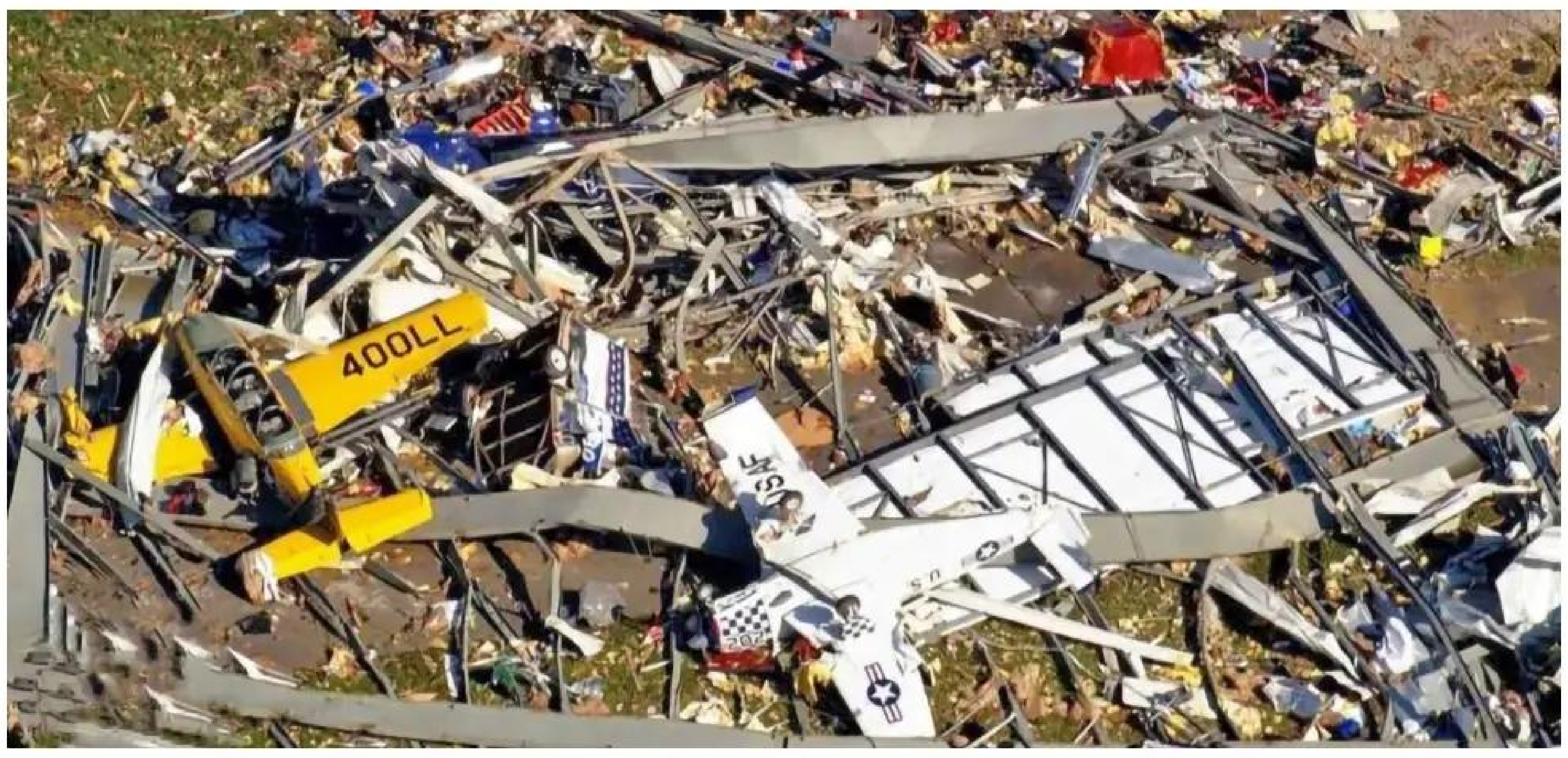
STURMOVIK TO FLY

The American Heritage Museum's program to return an Ilyushin Il-2 *Sturmovik* to the sky is moving forward, **reports Joe Scheil**. For several years, AHM has been gathering components throughout Europe of the WWII ground-attack aircraft. As typical of much of Soviet WWII aviation, the Il-2 production history is obscure – especially since as many as 42,330 were built (including the later Il-10). The plane was initially operated in small numbers and the Great Purge meant that production standards were extremely low and a number of the aircraft simply fell apart in the air. The Soviets had poor quality control, no training materials, and no set idea on how the Il-2 could be used in combat. The AHM has gathered a treasure-trove of four distinct Il-2 airframes — three two-seat variants and one extremely rare single-seater (first production variant). It is doubtful if any of the single-seaters survived the war and the AHM example was recovered from a lake in the Murmansk area during the early 2000s. Added to this, the AHM has also acquired lots of bits and pieces that will aid in restoration along with at least a half-dozen Klimov engines. The identities of the airframes are pretty much untraceable because that is just the way the Soviets did things. So far, only one small data plate has been found but some of the ID numbers are in ink with others in pencil. The wood on these projects has all rotted away but that will not pose a major problem.

Note the Alcoa lettering on the aluminum. If it was not for United States Lend-Lease aid, the majority of Il-2s could not have been built. It must be remembered that the Soviets never paid for what was owed nor returned any equipment (one of the Lend-Lease stipulations).



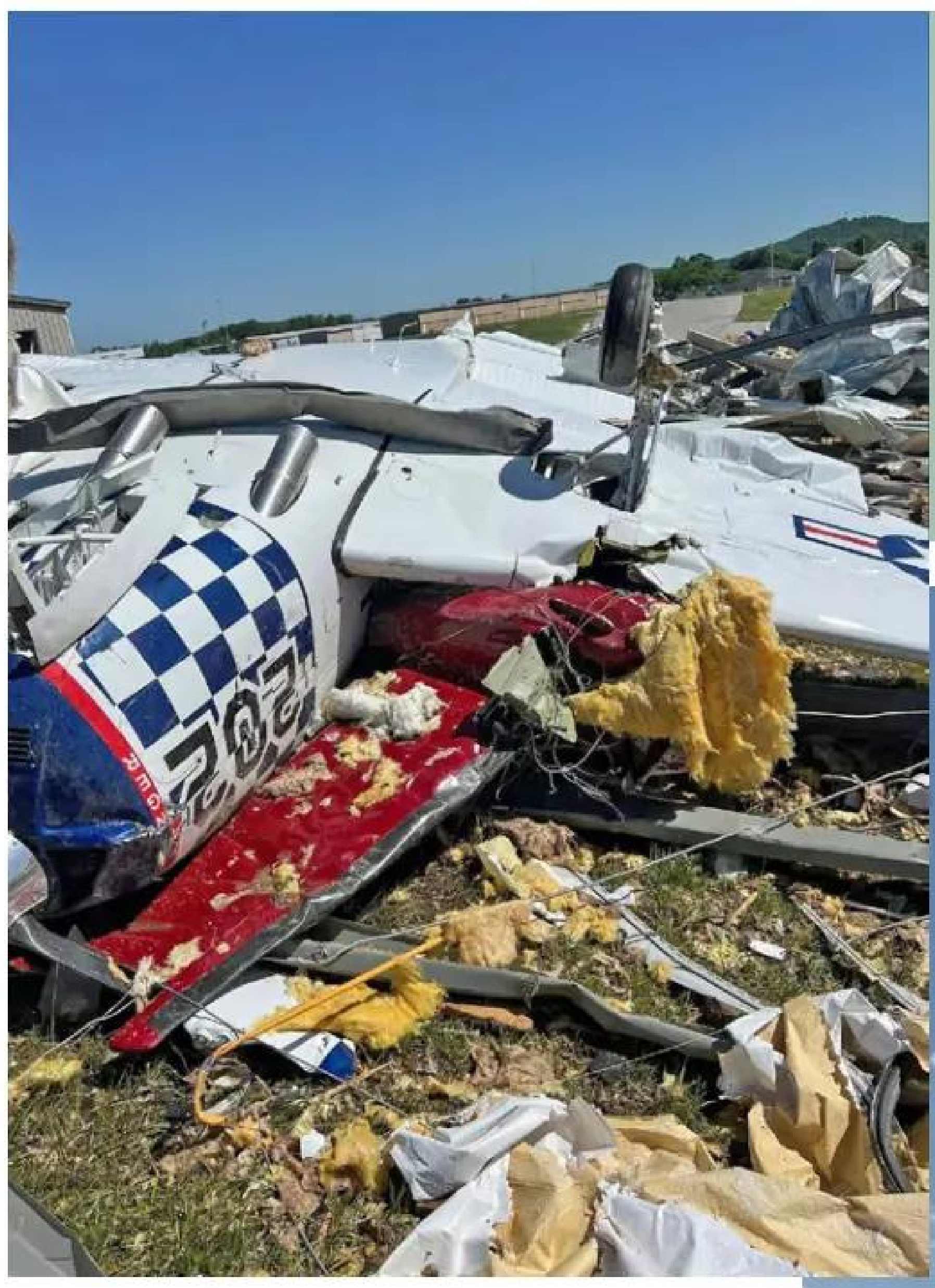
This Il-2 center section still has the canopy attached.



Aerial view of one of the flattened hangars and two destroyed T-34s.

TORNADO DEVASTATES T-34 GATHERING

In the early morning hours of 17 May, a tornado slammed into the London-Corbin Airport in southeast Kentucky and basically destroyed the airfield and most of the planes based at the field. Early news reports were a bit garbled but at least two medevac helicopters were destroyed and photos showed what appeared to be numerous Beech T-34 Mentors either destroyed or damaged. A bit of investigation revealed that the T-34 Association was holding its annual spring formation training event at the field. T-34s listed as destroyed include N326M N534BR, N400LL N246GR, and N134RD.



The majority of hangars at the field were ruined.

Removing one of the T-34 wrecks.

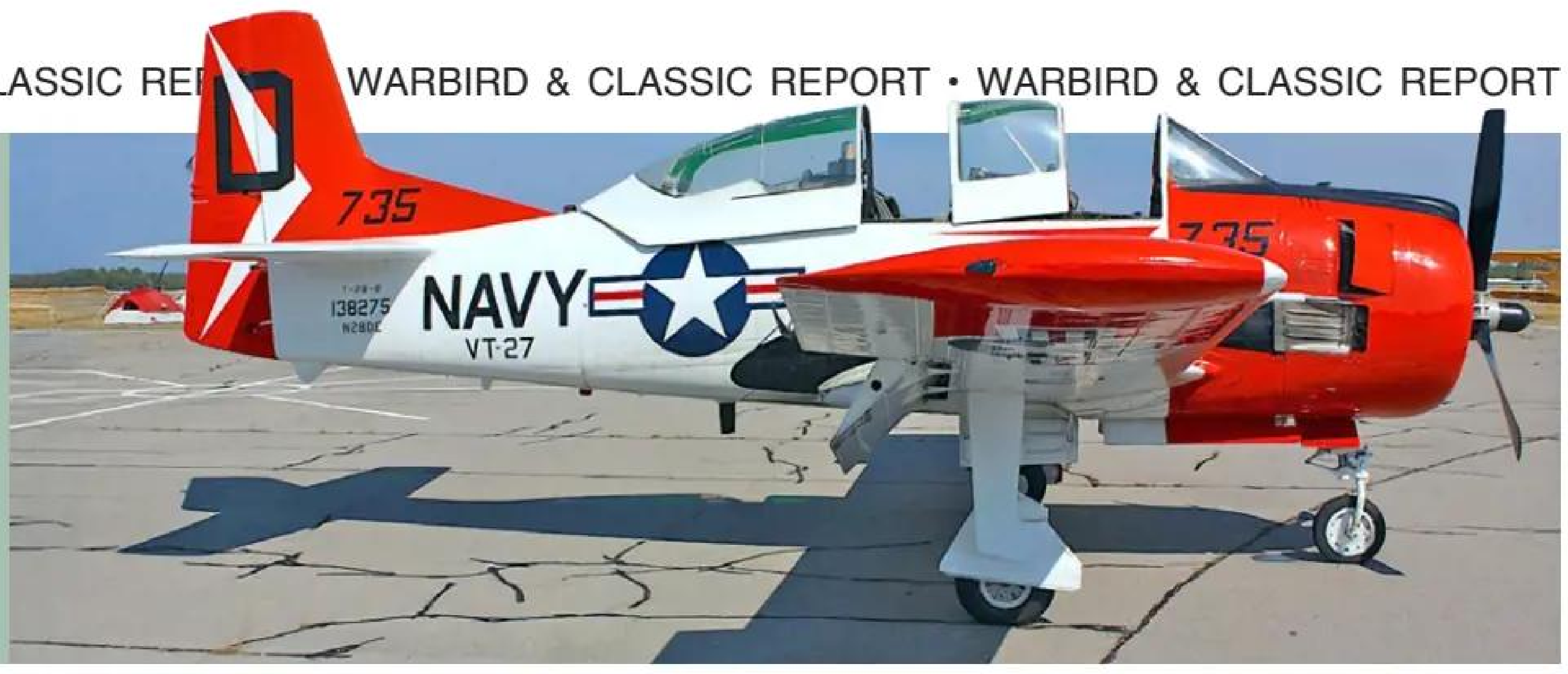
TROJAN DESTROYED

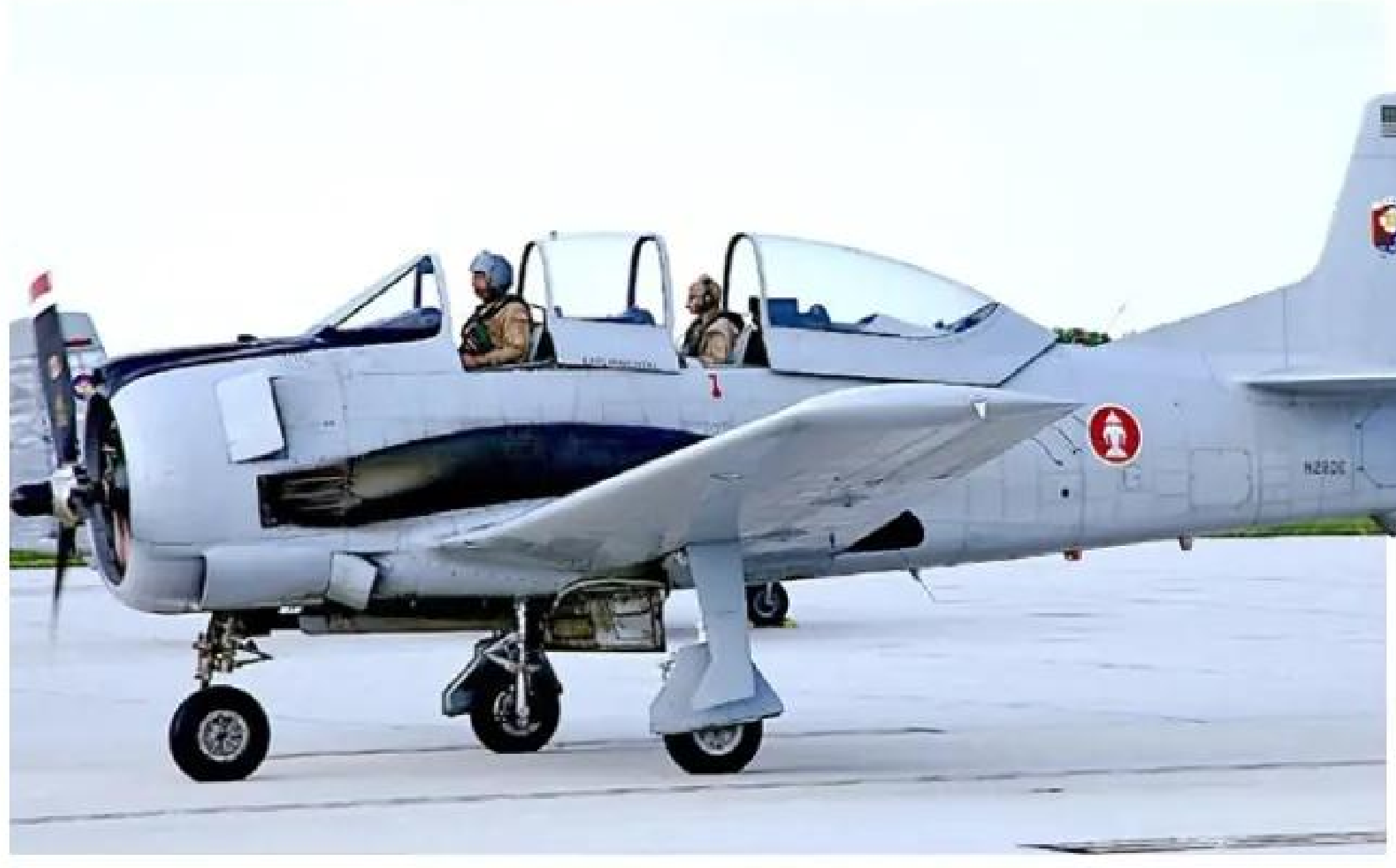
On 17 May, North American T-28B N28DE was destroyed when the aircraft crashed near Yuba County Airport, Marysville, California, after experiencing engine problems. The two aboard were injured and taken to a hospital. This particular aircraft was operated by the Lao-Hmong Memorial Foundation and it honored the Hmong that were recruited by the American government to fly and fight a "secret war" in Laos. Using modified T-28s, Hmong pilots flew thousands of missions against North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao targets but because of the so-called secret nature of the war, pilots and crews were not given the honors and recognition they deserved. After the end of the war, many Hmong refugees were settled in Minnesota. However, to this day these refugees have had a puzzling early death rate that studies can't pinpoint to one cause.

The Lao-Hmong Memorial Foundation was created to honor these veterans and in 2020, the Foundation purchased T-28B N28DE and finished it in the markings of the Royal Laotian Air Force. The eventual plan was to decommission the Trojan so it could serve as the central feature of a national memorial to be built by the Lao-Hmong Memorial Foundation.

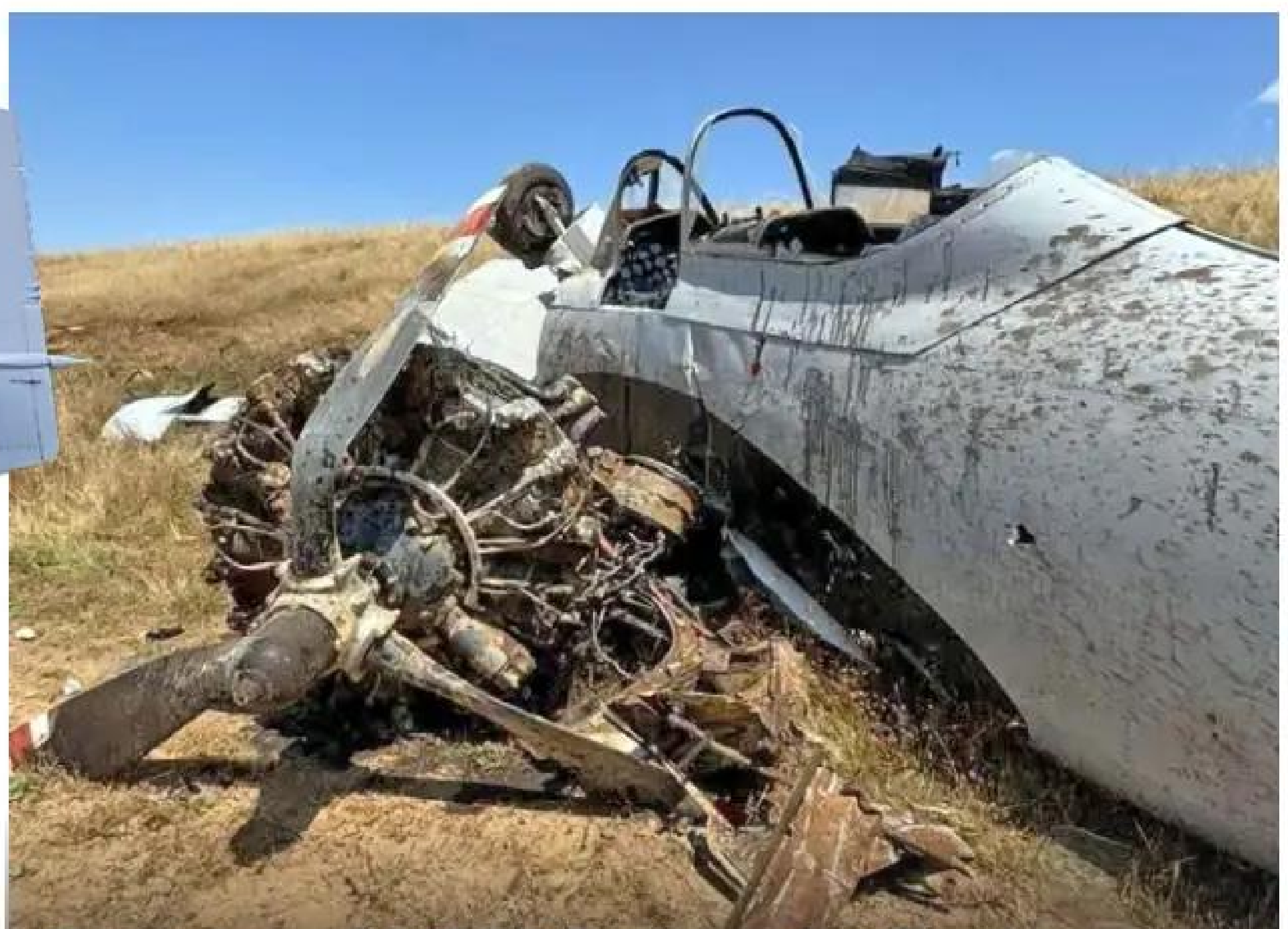
(continued on page 84)

After being sold surplus as N28DE, BuNo 138275 was restored in the markings of VT-27.

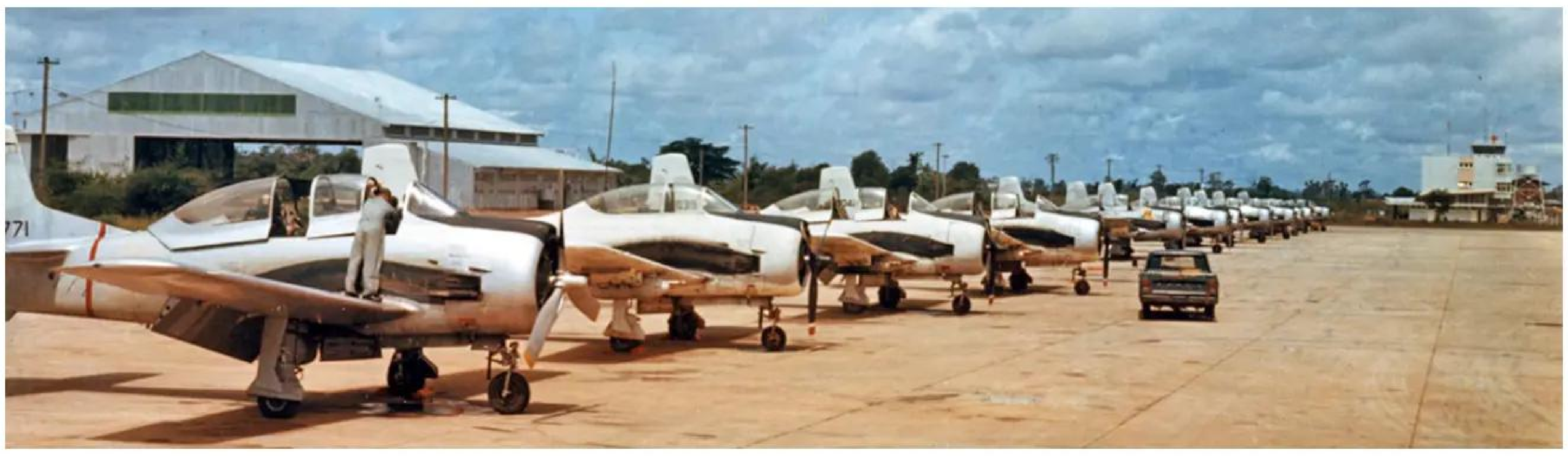




After being acquired by the Lao-Hmong Memorial Foundation, the Trojan was refinished in the markings of the Royal Laotian Air Force.



Remains of N28DE after the Trojan crashed near Yuba County Airport.



Line-up of Royal Lao Air Force Trojans during the Vietnam War.

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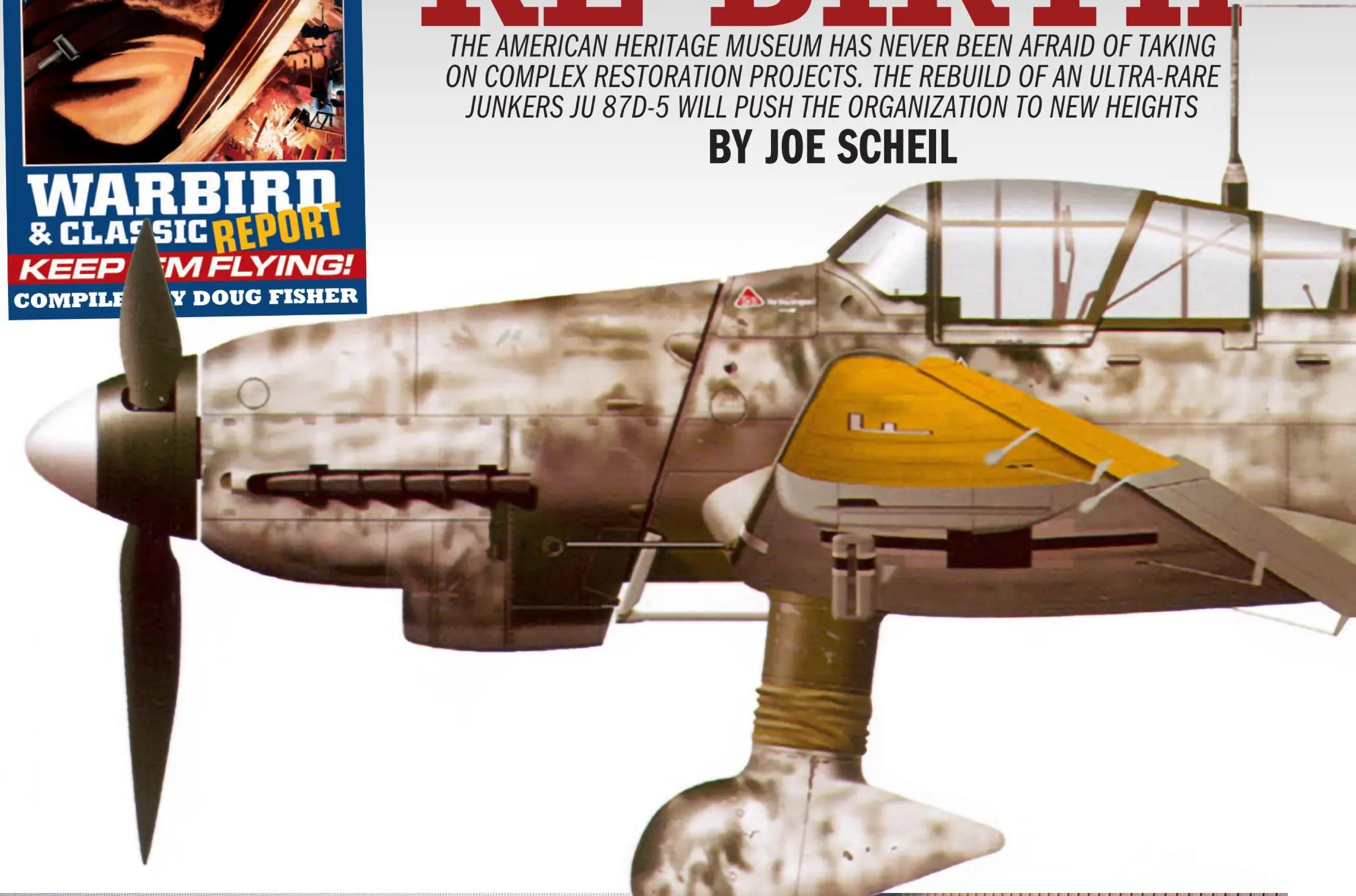
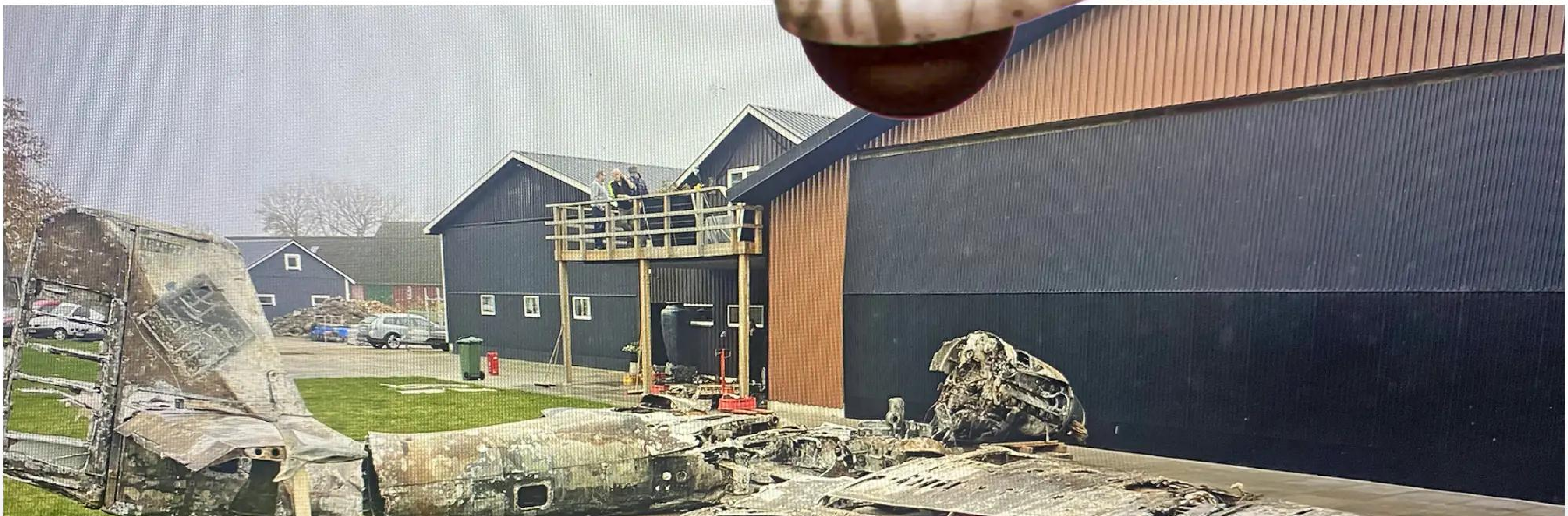
STUKA RE-BIRTH

THE AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM HAS NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF TAKING ON COMPLEX RESTORATION PROJECTS. THE REBUILD OF AN ULTRA-RARE JUNKERS JU 87D-5 WILL PUSH THE ORGANIZATION TO NEW HEIGHTS

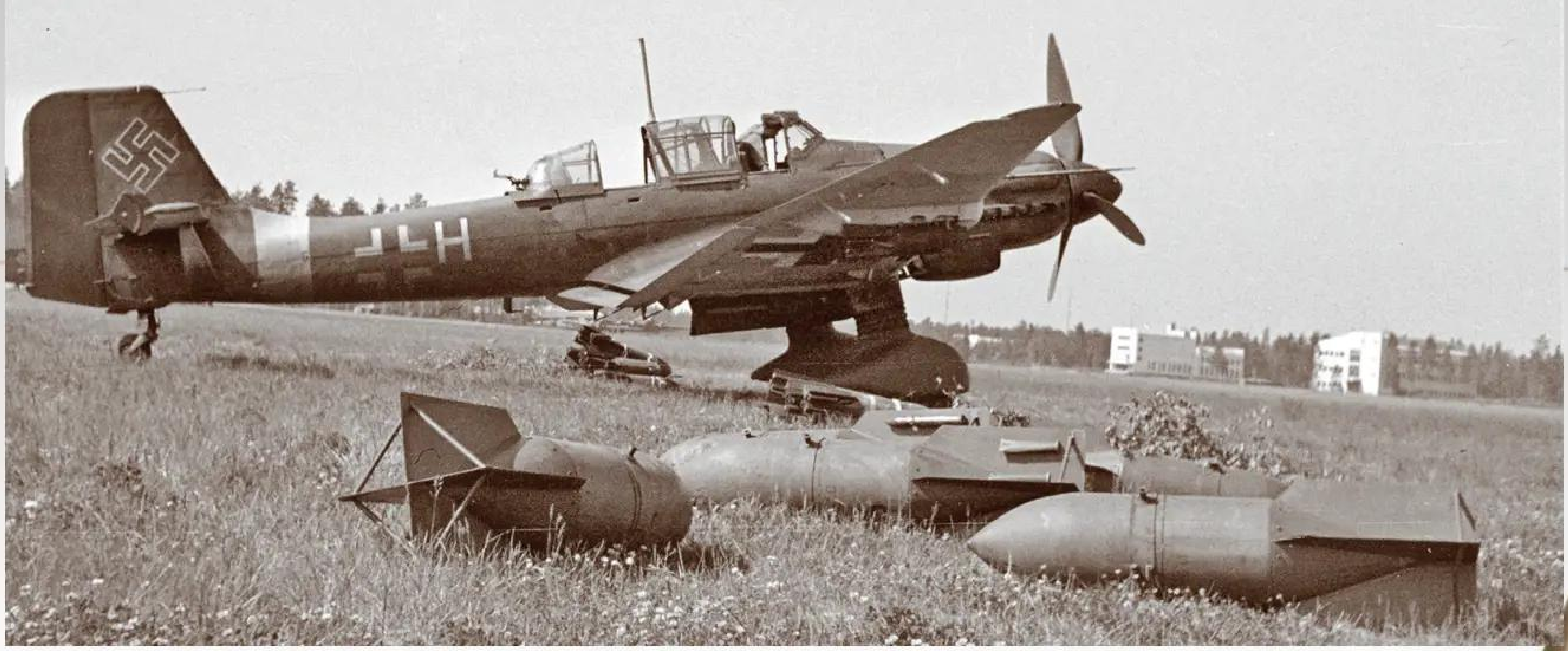
BY JOE SCHEIL



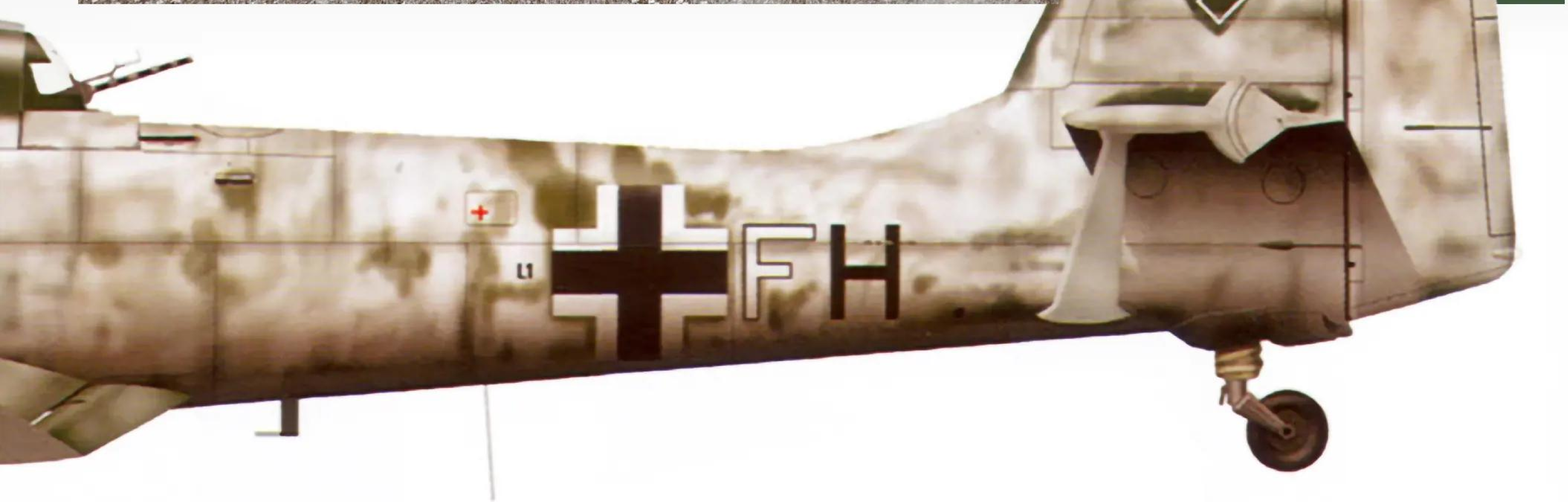


The Ju 87D-5 restoration project. As can be seen, a remarkable amount of several different finishes on the airframe survive.

An almost pastoral — except for the bombs — summer scene at Immola Airfield as Ju 87D-5 S7+H of *I./SG 3* awaits its next mission on 27 June 1944. The majority of WWII photos in this article were taken by Finnish military photographers at Immola.



Junker Ju 87D-5 L1+FH assigned to *I./SG 1*. This profile view shows how the winter camouflage was crudely applied — often with a brush or mop. This made for a very rough finish.



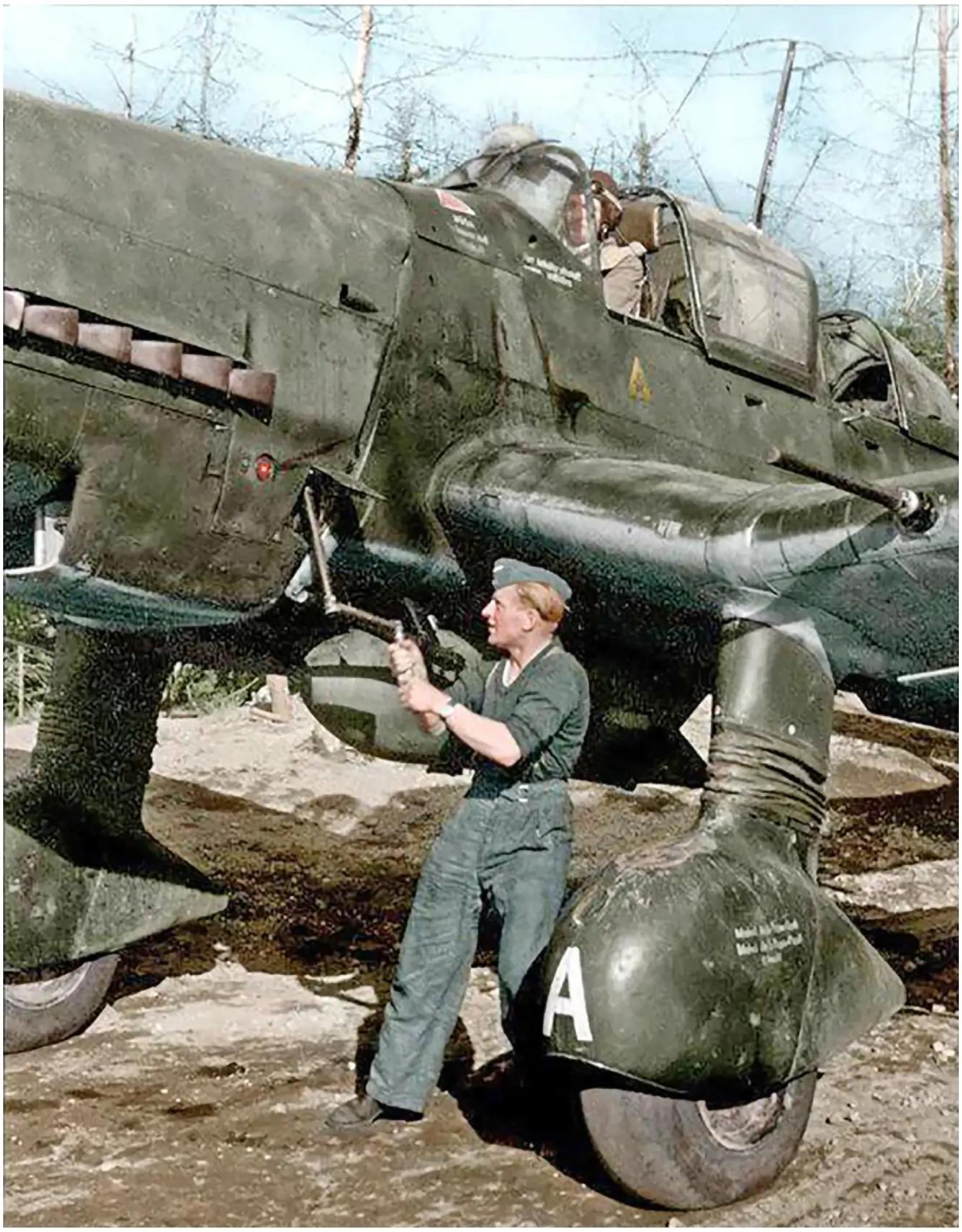
***S**tuka!* During the dark, early days of the Second World War that one word would cause terror throughout the nations of Europe that were enveloped by the mechanized destruction of the German *blitzkrieg*. The "Lightning War" pushed the technology of the time to the limit as Germany unleashed new generations of warplanes, combat ships, and armored fighting vehicles. *Stuka* was a shortened variant of the word *Sturzhampfflugzeug*. which basically translates into the generic "dive-bomber." However, during WWII *Stuka* pretty much meant just one thing — the inverted gull-wing Junkers Ju 87. With its rather clunky appearance, less than scintillating performance, and fixed landing gear, the Ju 87 did not — at least initially — seem to be an aircraft that would stand at the forefront of Nazi military domination. Yet, it did.

To the resolute Polish army dug in to face the coming invasion, the Ju 87s formed an aerial armada that could destroy the most entrenched fortifications. Scrambling to their PZL fighters (real gull wings and also with fixed gear), Polish pilots were caught in the open by wave after wave of diving Ju 87s dropping out of the sun. Escorted by protecting Messerschmitt Bf 109E fighters, the *Stukas* smashed every airfield until the Poles could no longer put up an aerial defense.

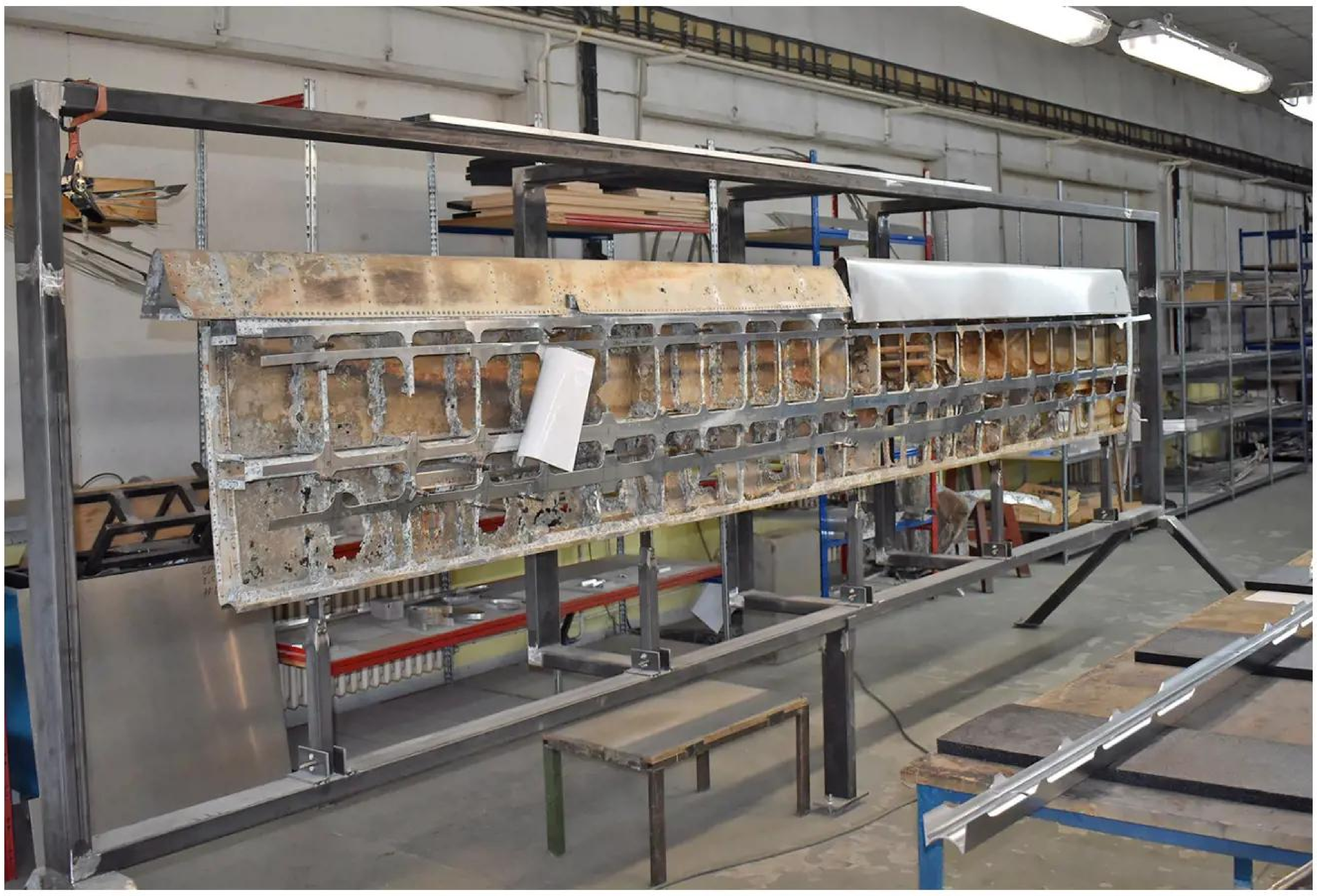
The following months after the Polish surrender were called the "Phony War" because not a hell of a lot happened — except for the fact that the Germans were building more warplanes and training more pilots for when things got hot again. And hot they got. With Hitler's push west, *Stukas* overran France, the Low Countries, and Denmark. They seemed unstoppable. Fighters from the British Expeditionary Force and France's *Armee de l'Air* were wiped from the sky and the wailing sirens fitted to the dive-bombers soon

The horizontal tail under reconstruction and restoration to flight status. While the specifications for these materials are known and presented in the available technical manuals, there are no factory drawings for the Ju 87 that survive. Each intricate part must be painstakingly examined, scanned, and drawn before a part can be fabricated.

Using an original spar part for a pattern, this new part was done in Czechoslovakia.



Although it usually took two crewmen, this individual is attempting to crank over the Jumo on his own. This photo shows the long-barrel wing gun on Ju 87D-5 S7+AH of *I./SG 3* to advantage.



The horizontal tail is light in weight and complex in construction. Note the new piece of metal on the right.

became the defining sound of terror to the hundreds of thousands of refugees attempting to flee down narrow country roads to the illusion of safety. The horrific wailing was captured in sound on newsreels of the time and soon the entire world was able not only to see but also hear *blitzkrieg*.

When Hitler came to the English Channel, he looked out across the narrow body of water that had served the United Kingdom for centuries as a stopping point for invaders. The war in the air soon changed all that. History has shown us that Hitler probably would have gone along with some sort of treaty with the British but the Brits were not having any of that. The *Luftwaffe* was soon launching from Occupied Europe to make the deadly back and forth crossings of the English Channel. The enemy would find stout resistance from the RAF but the *Stukas* got through, taking out vital airfield and port facilities and, perhaps most importantly, utilizing their pin-point accuracy to destroy the radar stations that ran up and down the English coast. It came at a price. Some 20% of the *Stuka* force was destroyed by Spitfires and Hurricanes. *Stukas* would then branch out to Italy, the Balkans, and, of course, the Russian Front.

Erhard Milch authorized the phase-out of Ju 87 production in 1944 so resources could be used to build more fighters to defend the *Reich*. It was not a popular decision with German ground troops, who saw the spectacular successes scored by the *Stukas* supporting them. The *Stuka* would fight to the very last day of the war in Europe. In all, approximately 5126 *Stukas* were built — not a huge number considering their massive successes. With the end of the war, the Allies were not particularly interested in taking any Ju 87s back home since there was much more to learn from German jet and rocket aircraft. This meant that only two complete airframes would survive into modern times: Ju 87G-2 WNr 494083 in the RAF Museum and Ju 87R-2/Trop WNr 5954 at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

Over the past two decades, research into the history of WWII has intensified and along with this has come a reanalysis of the importance of the Ju 87 to the overall conflict. This has led to the recovery of a few wrecks and artifacts. Included in this group is the subject of our article — Junkers Ju 87D-5 WNr 131587 coded Q9+CH that had last operated with *I./SG 5*.

Production of the Ju 87D series along with the similar G model (this group is often referred to as the “slim-nose” *Stukas*) came to approximately 3847 aircraft, of which 1488 were D-5s. The *Stuka* acquired by the AHM has an engaging history. Today, few Americans realize that a long and brutal portion of the Second World War was fought in Finland. That small country has an 830-mile border with Russia. It is a border that is well-established and precisely demarcated, with parts dating back to the 1595 Treaty of Teusina between Sweden and Muscovy. The most recent changes to this border were made in the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union. The citizens of Finland have a long distrust of the Soviets, and for good reason. Even today, Russia plays a very active role in the destabilization of Finland and that is one of the main reasons Finland became a NATO member on 4 April 2023. Currently, the border between the two countries is closed after a surge of asylum seekers poured into Finland — something the Finnish government claims was orchestrated by the Russians to destabilize the Finnish economy.

During what Finland called the Winter War, the Finns fought the Soviet Union from 1939 to 1940, finally capitulating to Soviet power and loosing considerable territory. The Finns wanted their land back and figured the best way to get it was to join with the Germans for the invasion of the Soviet Union in Operation *Barbarossa*. The Finns called this period (1941 to 1944) the Continuation War but they never formally joined the Axis. The Finns were originally considered to be “non-Aryan” by the Nazis because Finnish is not an Indo-European language. Because of Finland’s considerable military support, in November 1942 Hitler issued a decree stating that “from now on, Finland and the Finnish people [are to] be treated and designated as a Nordic state and a Nordic people.” The Germans and Finns made a very effective fighting force against the Soviets and deep advances were made into Soviet territory but this was followed by 2.5 years of stationary warfare. As the tide of war turned against Germany, the Finns knew they would suffer extreme retribution from the Soviets so they negotiated a treaty known as the Moscow Armistice. it was signed in September 1944 and the Finns agreed to expel German forces from their territory. In effect, this meant they had joined the Allies.

This resulted in the Lapland War of 1944 to 1945 as the Finns fought the Germans. Obviously, the Germans were not pleased and retributions were carried out against the Finns. The majority of German forces were in northern Finland. The *Luftwaffe* committed considerable aerial assets to fight alongside the Finns and thousands of Soviet aircraft were destroyed even though the conditions were some of the harshest of the war.

The new aft horizontal tail spar machined from a solid billet is a work of art. Light and strong, this is an incredible mechanical effort from the Czech Republic.

***Luftwaffe* armorers unload bombs at Immola on 28 June 1944.**

In the frozen north, the *Stukas* were particularly effective. Their rugged nature meant they could be operated from remote airfields with little in the way of support. Usually escorted by Fw 190s, Bf 109s, and Me 110s, the *Stukas* would be guided to targets where their dive-bombing techniques could be put to use. For the long winter months, the planes were given coats of white distemper that served as effective camouflage when operating over snow. This was applied directly over the different factory greens that constituted standard camouflage. The paint was often applied with mops. The Finns never operated Ju 87s but would often send their fighters to escort the dive-bombers.

Ju 87D-5 WNr 131587 flew with *I./SG 5* which later became part of Detachment Kuhlmey — a battle-hardened unit that operated between June 1944 and 13 August 1944.

A flight of Ju 87D-5s from *I./SG 3* thunders over a Fw 190A-6 from *4./JG 54* at Immola on 2 July 1944. At the Finnish airfield, the Fw 190s operated in conjunction with the *Stukas* in bombing and strafing targets. Once their bombs were gone, the Fw 190s could then protect the *Stukas* against Russian fighters.

***Stuka* restoration project manager Mikael Carlson with the newly-acquired Ju 87D fear leg.**

One wing has been taken apart so that the different assemblies could be closely examined.

This was a temporary unit commanded by *Oberstleutenant* Kurt Kuhlmey and built around *Schlachtgeschwader 3*, also commanded by Kuhlmey, and they mainly flew from Immola Airfield. During that time, they flew over 2700 missions and dropped 770 tons of bombs. They destroyed around 150 Soviet aircraft and about 200 tanks while also destroying many bridges and transport vehicles. They lost 41 aircraft with 23 pilots killed.

On 4 April 1944, WNr 131587 was slated to be flown by *Lt. Uffz.* Walter Ernest and *Uffz.* Ernest Zenker. For the most part, the unit's *Stukas* were not assigned to individual crews but were piloted by whomever was on the day's duty roster. Making sure the oil in the massive Jumo inverted V-12 was warm, two ground crewmen started the mission by turning the external crank for the inertia starter (because of the engine's size, it took two men) and once the engine coughed into life, the handle was pulled clear and then the chocks were yanked from the tires and the *Stuka* was good to go.

The mission for that April day over 80 years ago was to search out and destroy Soviet targets of opportunity but, currently, the results of the flight are not known. What is known is

(continued on page 80)

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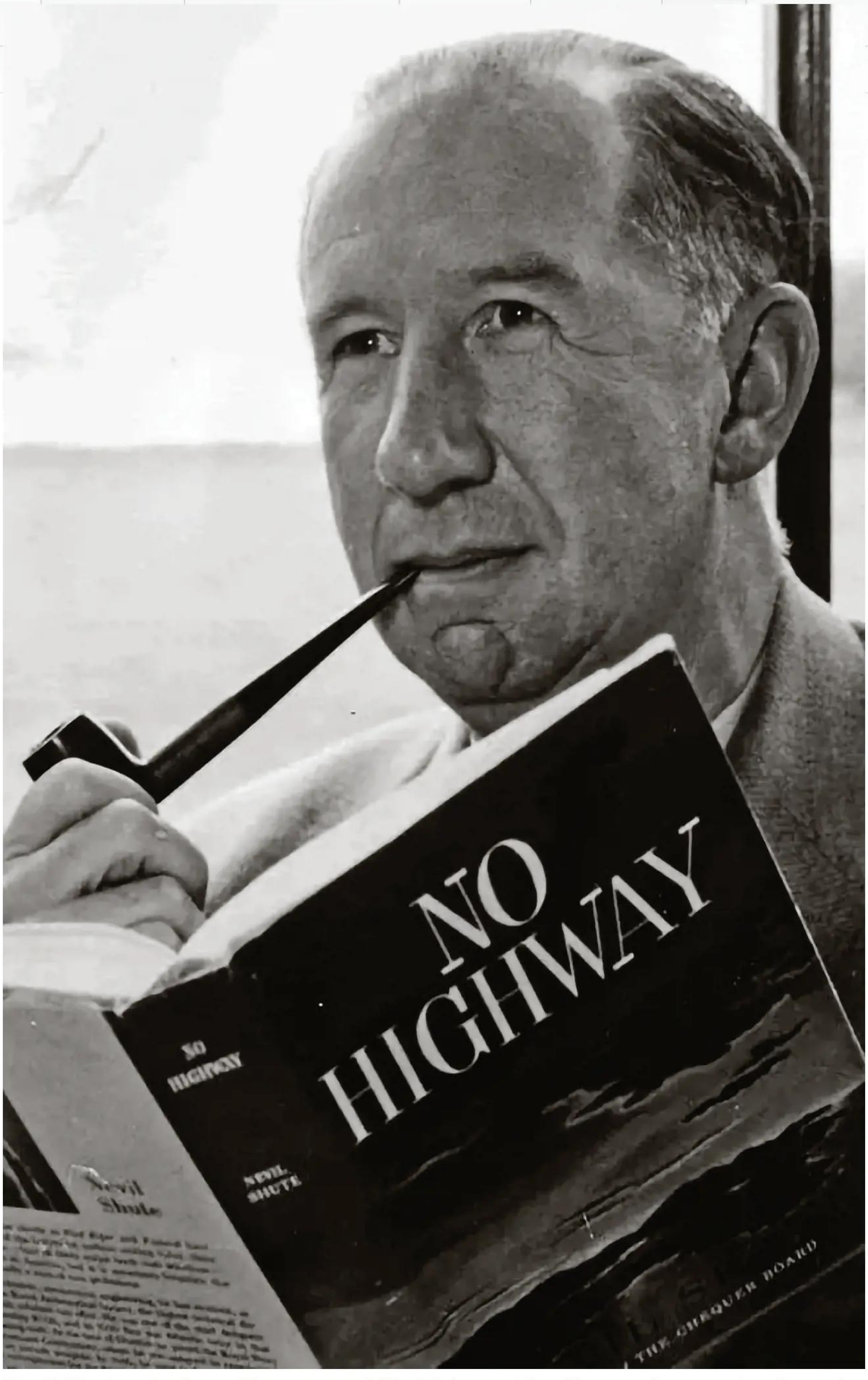
WORDS AND MUSIC FOR A MECHANICAL MAN

NEVIL SHUTE NORWAY WAS A MAN OF MANY SKILLS. TODAY. HIS BOOKS (AND THE MOVIES MADE FROM THEM) STILL HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF RELEVANCE



Nevil Shute relaxing with a copy of *No Highway*. The film version received good reviews in Britain but mixed reviews from critics in the USA. Three years after the film was released (and six years after the book), there were two perplexing fatal crashes involving BOAC de Havilland Comet Mk. I jet airliners caused by metal fatigue — the same thing that happened to the Reindeer but in a different manner.

I was never a great student. Growing up in a large metropolitan city, I was just one of 500 other kids in my desegregated public high school. In my younger years my biggest concerns were how to cover my textbooks with old brown paper bags, doodling on my PeeChee notebooks, and how far I could ride my bike before I had to be home for dinner. In high school, my interests evolved to thinking about girls and working on cars, which meant I could change a tire but struggled to find gas money.

I can only remember a couple names of my teachers — but not for altruistic reasons. I don't remember what Mr. Babino taught, but he was a nerdy-looking man probably in his late 40s who wore skinny bow-ties and drove a Rambler. I think one of my friends let the air out of the tires of the Rambler on more than one occasion. Mrs. Toppfer taught music, which I still struggle with after all these years. I can't remember any English teacher names, but they would not believe that I could actually write a monthly column for a magazine because I was always late turning in my homework and my favorite books either just had pictures or they started with the same yellow and black title: *CliffsNotes*.

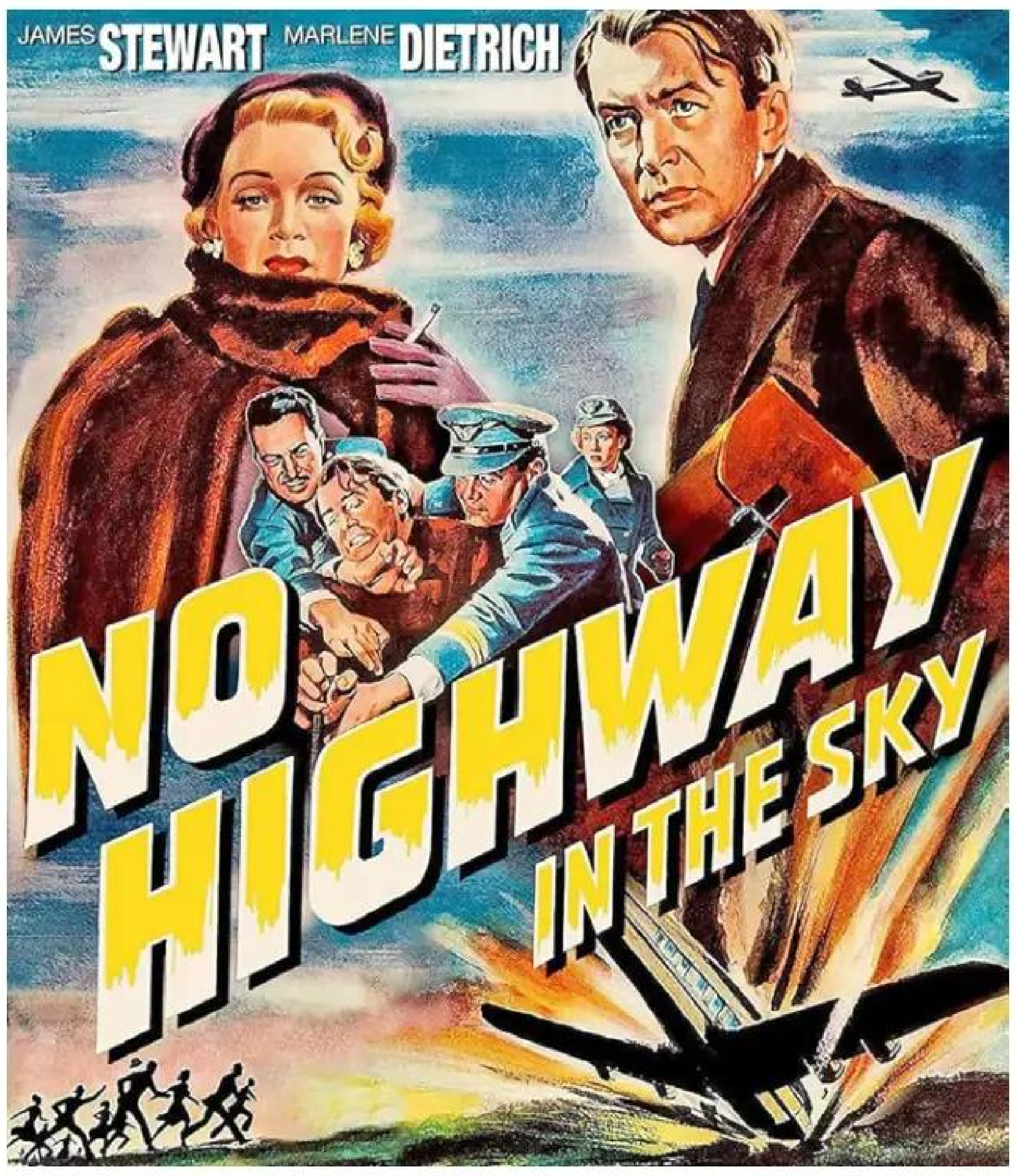
Looking back, I really only had two great accomplishments in public school. In junior high, I took typing for one year. The first semester, we actually used manual typewriters with a ringing bell near the end of each typed line and a return lever. The following semester we upgraded to electric typewriters and entered into the space age with the Apollo astronauts. My success in this class was never in my typing ability, but it was in the fact that I was only one of two boys in a class with all girls and that the teacher was the most beautiful woman in the school. It was never a chore to go to typing class, but I am still traumatized by having to type "The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain" a

G
G
R 101
G-FAAW
R 101

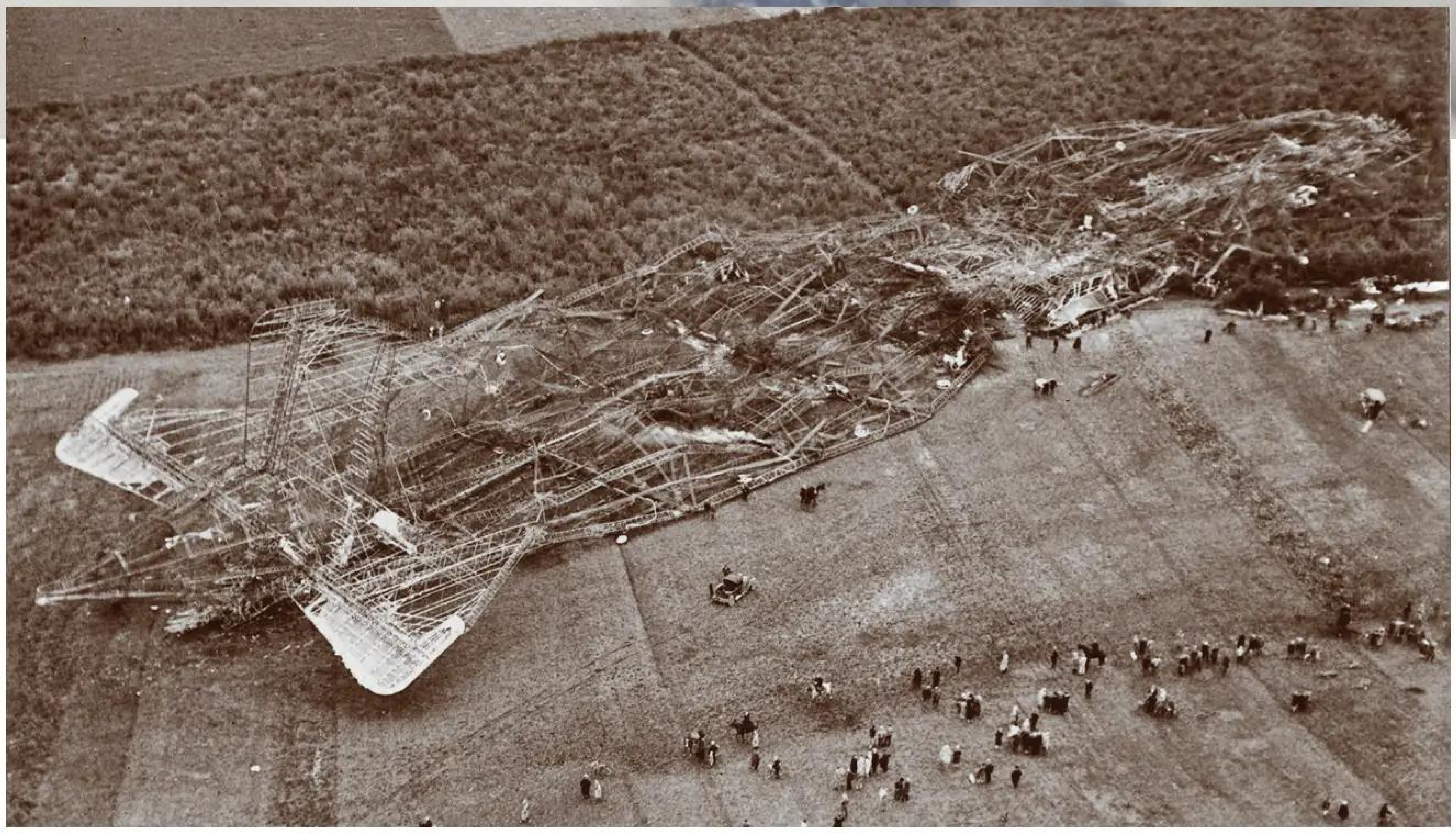
Shute was involved with the last of the great British airships — the *R-100* and *R-101*.

billion times. I can at least still type to this day, and it is a skill that has served me well professionally for over 50 years.

The second great accomplishment occurred in the summer between my sophomore and junior years in high school. Back in those Jurassic times, we still had wood shop and metal shop in the school, and that summer they were building a new annex in the teachers' parking lot that was going to be an auto shop. I obviously already knew everything there was to know about cars so I wasn't going to take that class, but there was a math teacher in the school who had previously been in the US Air Force and he suggested that they build two additional rooms on the auto shop annex and he would teach aviation shop. For the first semester of my junior year, we had private pilot ground school and at the end of the course we



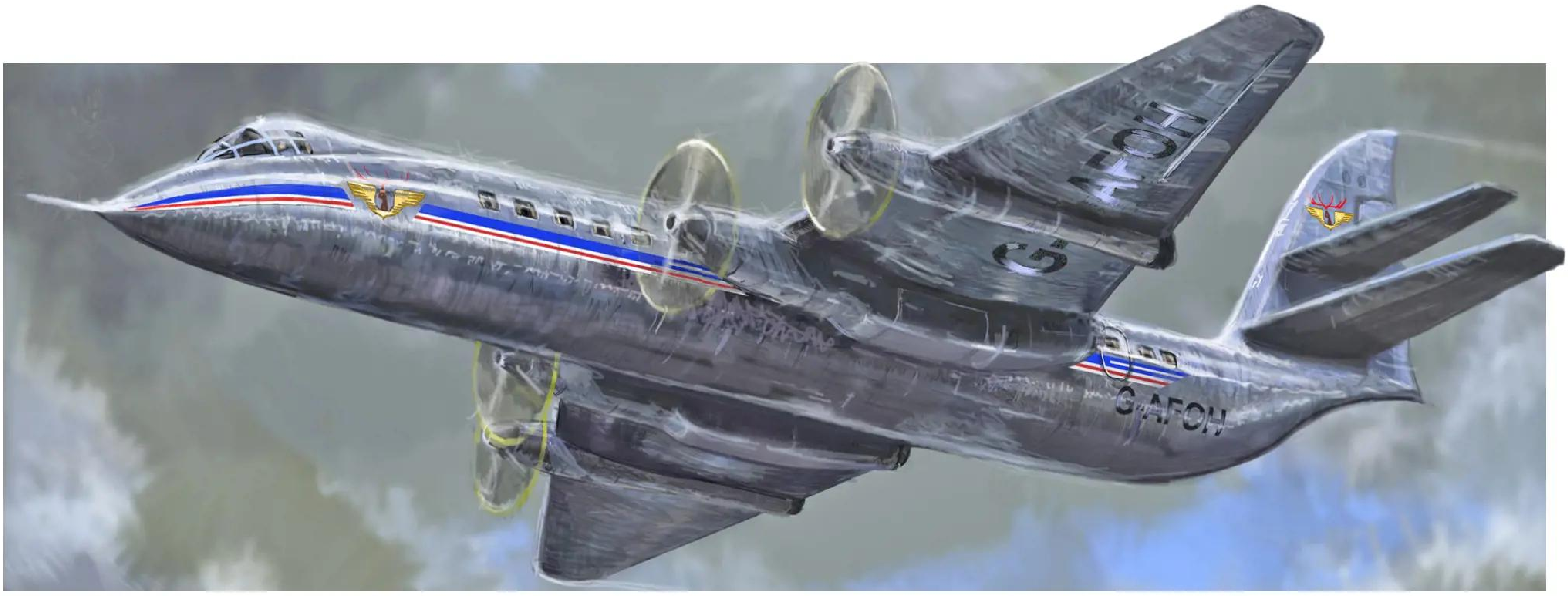
Dramatic poster for *No Highway in the Sky*. The fictional Reindeer suffered from several engineering problems that would cause the type to crash after a certain number of hours had been flown on the aircraft. A few years later, the early de Havilland Comet jetliners would eerily suffer the same fate.



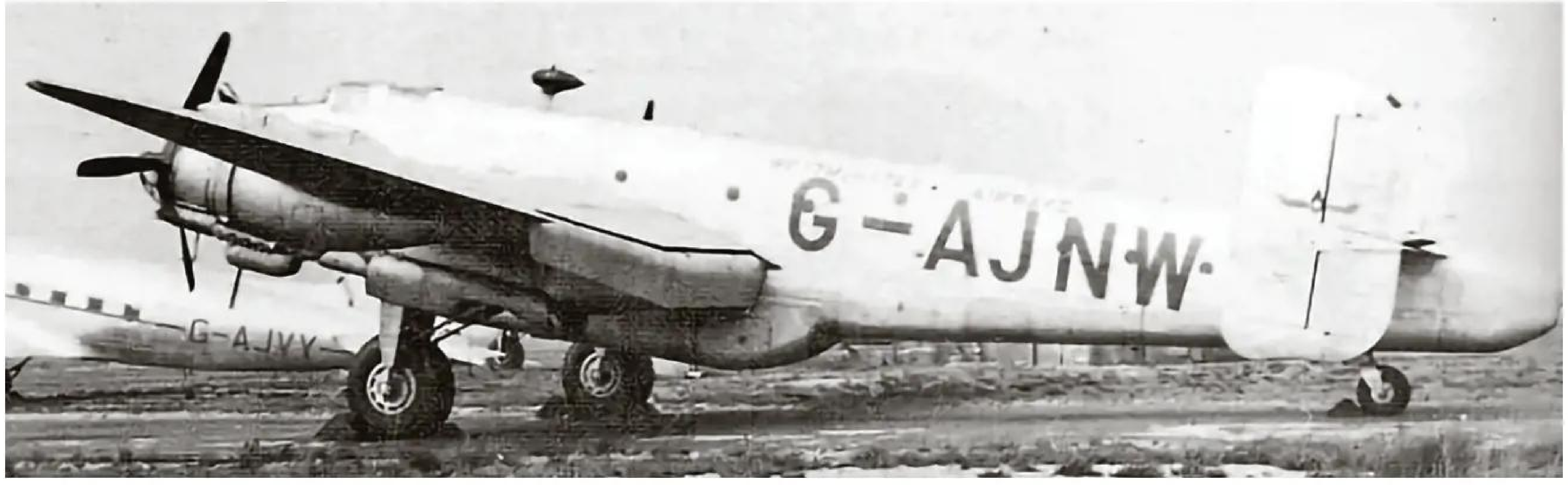
The crash of the *R-101* spelled the end for the British airship industry.

Shute was instrumental in starting Airspeed and was responsible for creating the sleek Envoy.

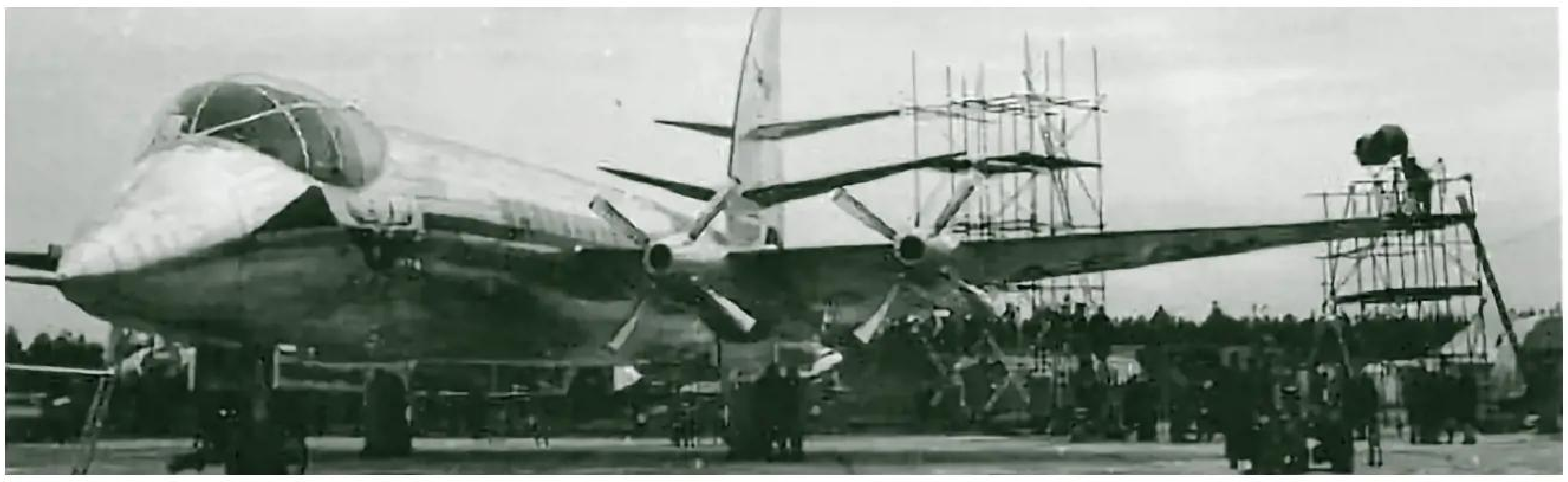
Handley Page built a cargo/passenger variant of the Halifax bomber and one of these machines would become the basis for the Reindeer.



Artist concept of the Rutland Reindeer in flight.



We have to dig into some real aviation esoterica when it comes to *No Highway in the Sky*. The producers were casting about for an aircraft that could be utilized as the Reindeer airliner when they happened to run across Handley Page Halifax C Mk. VIII PP296 languishing at Blackbushe Airport near London. After its military life, the plane was purchased by Westminster Airways on 27 April 1949 and converted as a tanker registered G-AJNW to haul fuel to Berlin during that Cold War crisis. The aircraft flew 116 tanker missions before returning to Blackbushe and parked on 26 April 1950. At this point, no one wanted a Halifax and it was purchased for scrap value by the studio.

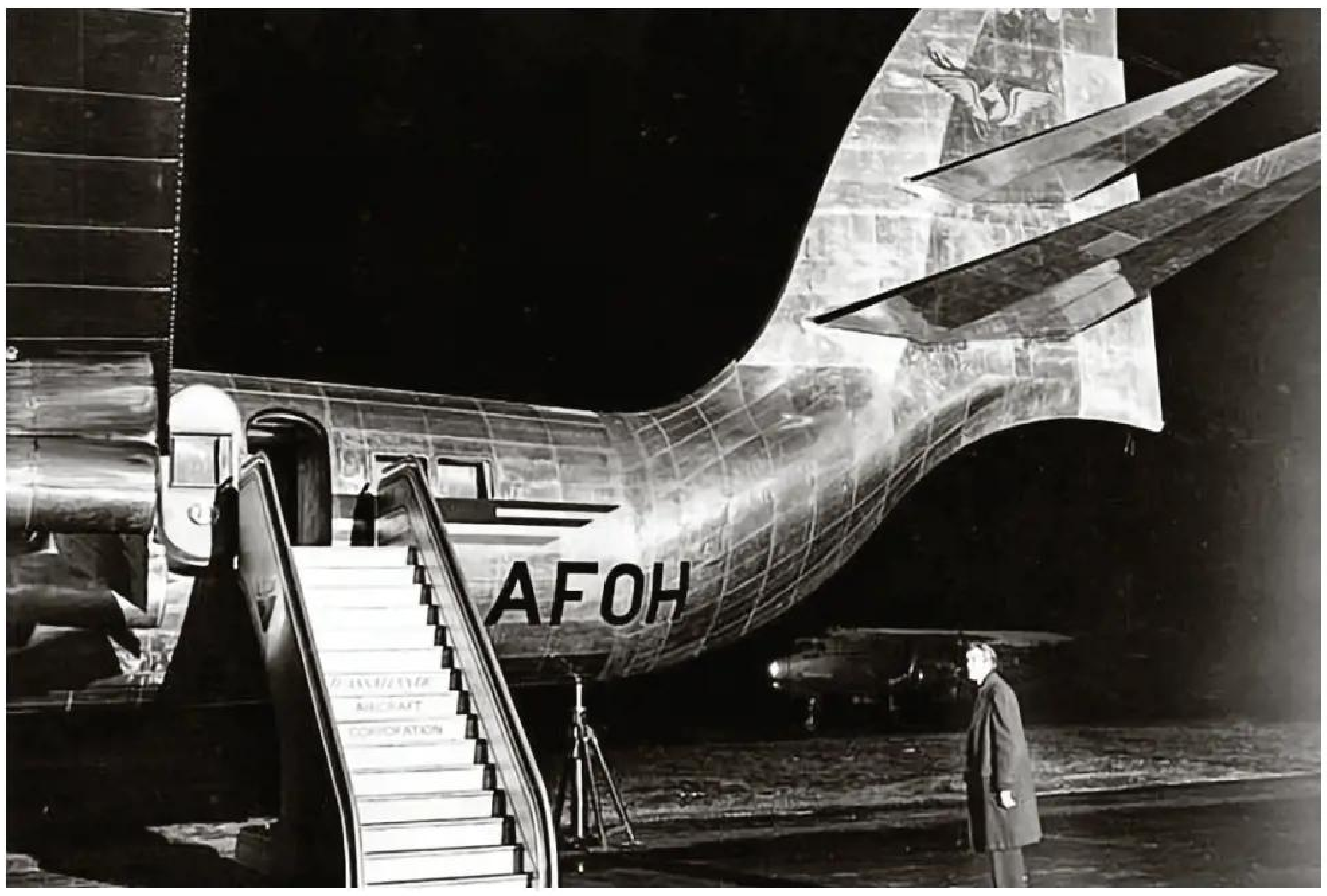


Conversion for the Reindeer was quite extensive and included this most curious biplane tail with a huge swept vertical fin. Other refinements included tricycle landing gear and the addition of "turboprop" engines. The plane was given the fictious registration of G-AFOH. Except for the strange biplane tail and massive canopy as big as a living room, the aircraft looked rather convincing.

took our private pilot written exam. The grade you got on your written exam was the grade you got in the class. That class changed the entire trajectory of my life, as well as that of my two buddies whom also attended — one is now retiring as the most senior captain at Frontier Airlines.

I have had the good fortune of meeting many interesting people because of aviation and, as often is the case, those interactions frequently lead to conversations about the weather and to what books people have enjoyed reading. One fellow vintage airplane enthusiast introduced me to the British author Nevil Shute, his numerous thrilling novels involving aviation and how they intertwined with the history of WWI, WWII, and the common folks impacted by those wars. I am now passing that favor on to you, the readers of *Air Classics*.

You will be in for a bit of a treasure hunt at your local used bookstore, because these books were written during the 1920s through the 1960s. In today's internet world, your hunting may be expedited on eBay or *bookfinder.com* but half the fun is



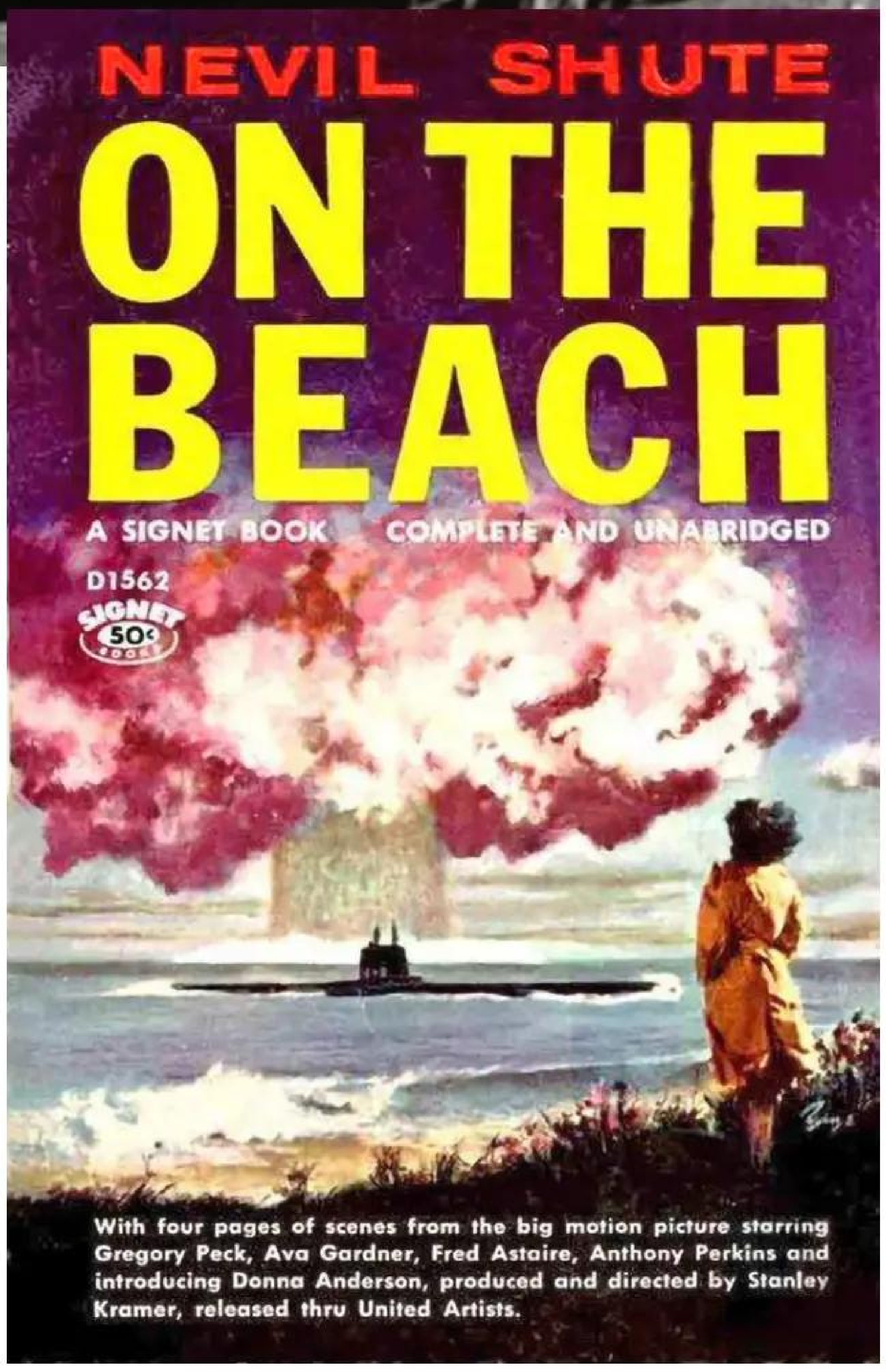
Stewart by the biplane tail. As can be seen, the studio went to a great deal of trouble in making the Reindeer appear as real as possible.

Stewart and Dietrich certainly made for the odd couple aboard the Reindeer.

A model Reindeer charges through the clouds in the film. Besides the biplane tail, the massive canopy is noteworthy.

Shute had an extremely adventurous side to his personality. After the war, he purchased a surplus Percival Proctor and flew it from the UK to Australia (and back) during 1948, accompanied by friend and fellow writer James Riddell and this resulted in a 1950 book titled *Flight of Fancy*. The trip resulted in Shute writing that he "felt oppressed by British taxation" and this resulted in he and his family moving to Australia. He would state, "for the first time in my life I saw how people live in an English-speaking country outside England."

To go along with his interest in aviation, Shute purchased and raced a Jaguar XK-140 while in Australia. At the time, this was the world's fastest sport car and he incorporated a racing scene in his best-selling *On the Beach*.


NEVIL SHUTE
ON THE BEACH
A SIGNET BOOK COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED
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With four pages of scenes from the big motion picture starring Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Fred Astaire, Anthony Perkins and introducing Donna Anderson, produced and directed by Stanley Kramer, released thru United Artists.

Shute brought *On the Beach* into an already paranoid world and it immediately became a critical success but was not a money maker.

always in the search and the volumes are definitely worth hunting down.

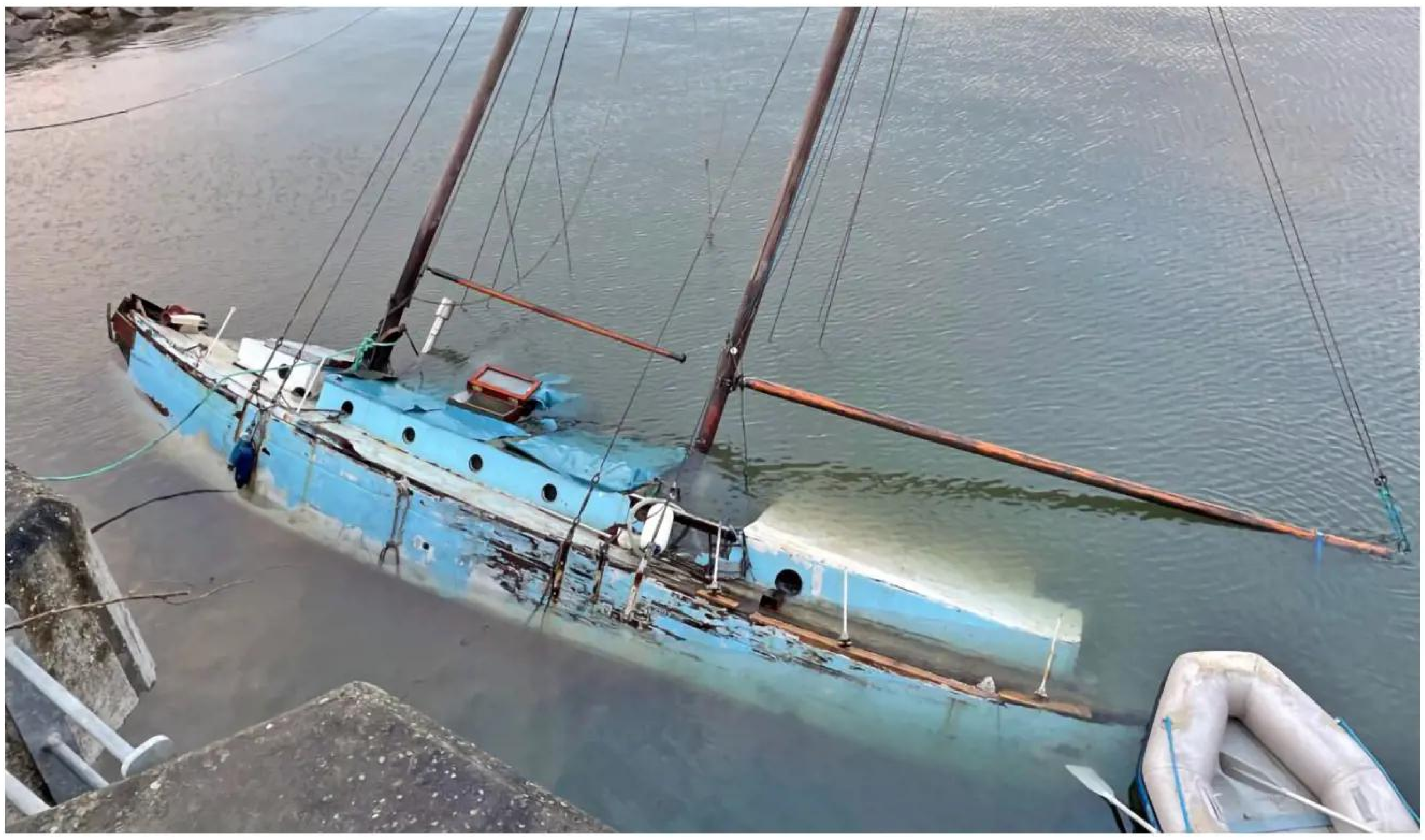
Nevil Shute Norway was born in England in 1899, but he grew up in Ireland where his father ran one of the government's post offices. The family lived in Dublin at the time of the 1916 Rising and young Nevil served as (and was commended for) a stretcher bearer hauling away the hundreds of wounded gunned down by British bullets. Nevil attempted to get a commission with the Royal Flying Corps during WWI but he was unsuccessful because he stammered, so he took a position as a gunner.

Nevil was trained as a pilot and as an aeronautical engineer at Oxford and he worked at de Havilland Aircraft Company during vacations while at engineering school. Not particularly happy with the lack of job advancement at de Havilland, Nevil first worked professionally as a stress engineer at Airship Guarantee Company (a subsidiary of Vickers Aircraft) on England's short-lived foray into airship dirigibles in the late 1920s. He worked as deputy chief engineer under the brilliant Barnes Wallis on the massive *R-100* project and took over entirely when Wallis left.

The British government planned a network of these massive airships that would link all outposts of the British Empire as they hauled cargo, passengers, and mail. During his evenings and off-hours, Nevil began writing novels as a way to pass the time and clear his mind from the daily grind of stress calculations.

After the demise of the airship era with the disastrous crash of the government-developed *R-101*, Nevil became a co-founder and manager of Airspeed Limited between 1931/1938. He continued to write and he shortened his pen name to Nevil Shute to avoid any complications with his professional aviation career as Nevil Shute Norway. The struggles at the Airspeed Ltd. startup company that consumed Nevil's time included securing investors and designing an airplane that could be sold commercially. Eventually, Airspeed secured a contract with the King of England to build a craft known as the Envoy for the King to use in international travel. De Havilland was humiliated that a startup company secured the contract, but it was so impressed with the Envoy that it agreed to purchase and merge Airspeed into de Havilland. This would result in over 8500 Envoy variants known as the Airspeed Oxford being constructed. The Oxford became the standard advanced multi-engine trainer for the Royal Air Force. Nevil was sufficiently financially rewarded by the merger that he could leave his aeronautical engineering days behind and focus his talents on creative writing.

Nevil spent the Second World War as a commissioned Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve officer working for the British Admiralty in the Directorate of Miscellaneous Weapons Development. He served as the head of engineering on various projects including a rocket-propelled, explosive-laden cart and anti-submarine missiles. His fame as an author caused the Ministry of Information to send Nevil to the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944 (and later to Burma) where he



Shute also became a fan of sailing and he purchased a Hillyard yacht he named *Runagate*, after a boat in one of his books. He bought the 15-ton vessel in 1939 and had numerous adventures with her. After he sold the yacht, it went through several owners and its condition drastically went downhill. In 2007, members of the Nevil Shute Norway Foundation tracked her down and found that her current owner was living on the ship while attempting to restore her. In December 2021, she was caught in a storm and partially sank.

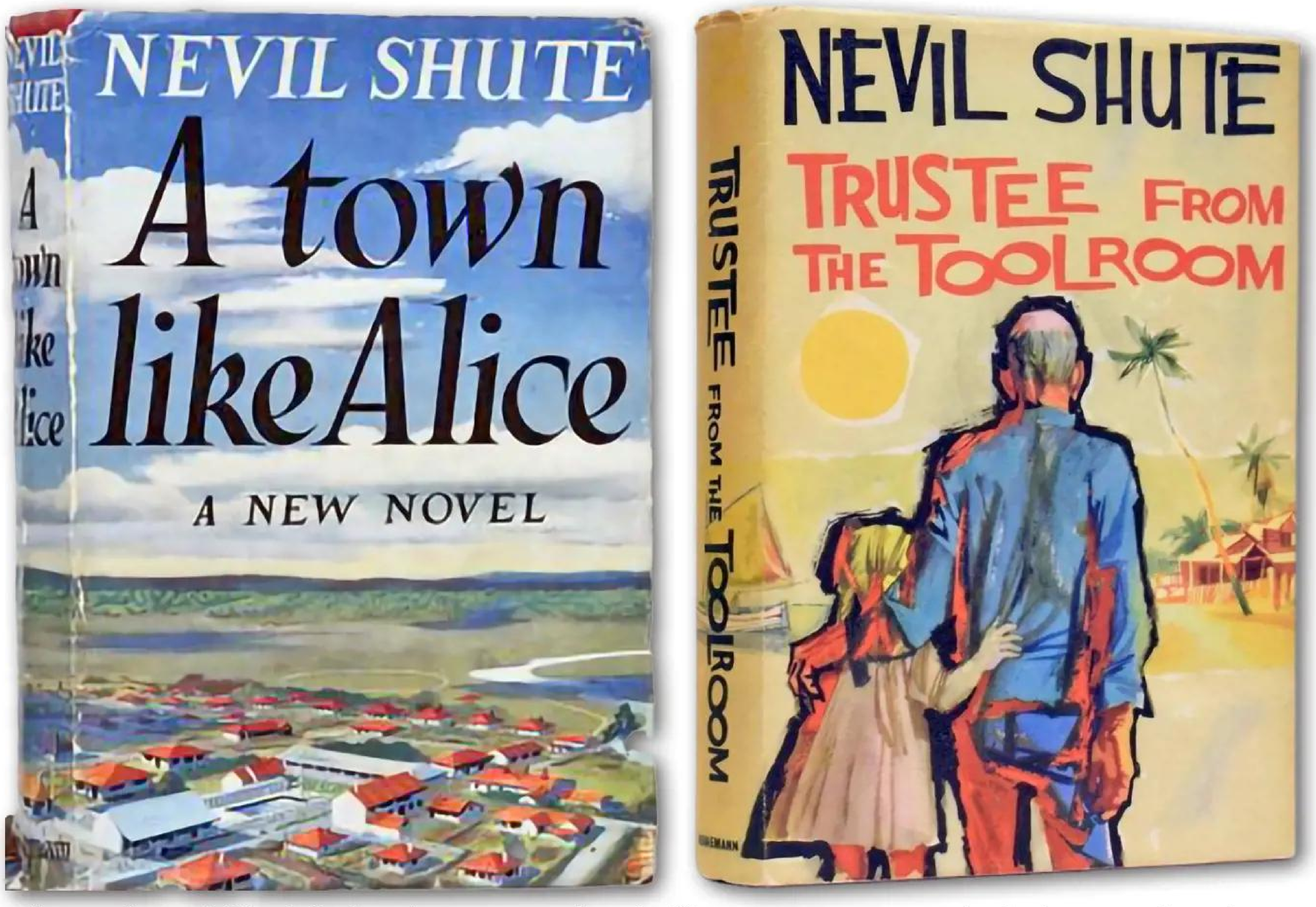
served as a war correspondent.

Nevil became disillusioned by the post-war government in England and the rise of socialism combined with the beginning collapse of the British aviation industry. He purchased a war surplus Percival Proctor and, along with a pal, made a daring flight from England to Australia — and back. After considerable consideration, he moved his family to Australia where he enjoyed the freer political climate along with the elimination of many of the British class and social barriers. Writing intensely, Nevil continued his rising success as a best-selling author. Along with his enjoyment of piloting light aircraft, his rising income (made all that much sweeter by avoiding the crippling British taxes) allowed him to branch off and he dabbled in car and yacht racing.

In total, Nevil wrote 24 novels. Many of these would go on to become movies, television programs, and series (sometimes more than once). Most of his novels have some type of thrilling aspect or event that engages the reader. At least half of the novels center around aviation settings or events. Common sub-themes include concepts of remembering, finding, or establishing a home environment. Nevil was not afraid to take on then-current social issues such as race, religion, war, governmental ineptitude and bridging social classes. One recurring theme that makes his novels so relatable is the honor of work and the indefeasible value of the common man. Romantic plots are common, but always plutonic. The storylines generally follow his professional careers, with the first third about flying adventures, the second third about WWII events, and the last third about life in Australia. All of his books were reprinted during 2009, thus giving an entirely new generation a chance to read and enjoy his talent.

Perhaps Nevil's most famous novel is the very dark 1957 *On The Beach*, which is story of the demise of mankind in an atomic/nuclear war world. Once they saw the bleak script, the US Department of Defense refused to cooperate with the film in any manner — especially denying use of submarines. Britain allowed use of HMS *Andrew* (non-nuclear, diesel powered) while Australia pitched in with HMAS *Melbourne*. The film was greeted with mixed reviews and in the end lost money. Most reviewers stated that the point of the novel was put across in an effective manner but that the acting was "typically Hollywood" and downgraded the importance of the novel. *Variety* wrote: "A solid film of considerable emotional, as well as cerebral, content. But the fact remains that the final impact is as heavy as a leaden shroud. The spectator is left with the sick feeling that he's had a preview of Armageddon, in which all contestants lost." This novel has been made into a movie on two separate occasions; however, seven more of his novels have also been made into movies or television mini-series. In 1960, Shute suffered a stroke while in Melbourne and died soon after. He was only 60.

Although he was from a generation or two before us, Nevil's stories and themes are still current and full of insight. Most importantly, you will find his aviation tales to be thrilling, and you will not be disappointed by reading any or all of the works of Nevil Shute. Best of all, none of them come with CliffsNotes! **AC**



A number of Shute's books were not only literary successes but also went on to be made into movies and television series. *A Town Like Alice* was pulled from the 1958 Cannes Film Festival because the French were afraid that the depiction of the murderous Japanese activities during WWII would offend the Japanese. This led actor Peter Finch to state, "The festivals are just a joke — a film-selling racket which offers the chance for vulgar display and reckless extravagance. They serve no cultural purpose and the awards don't mean a thing."

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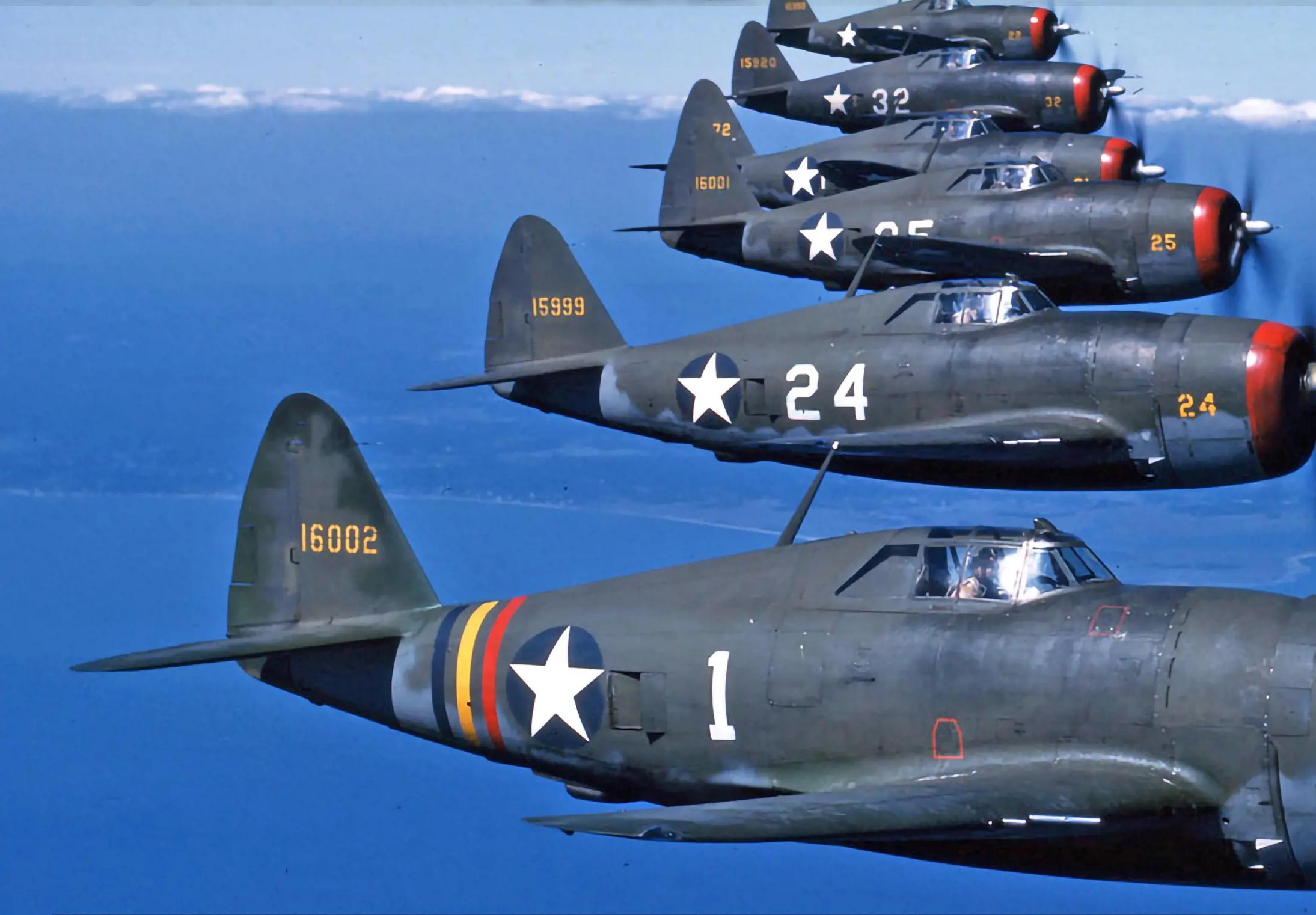
COLORS OF WAR

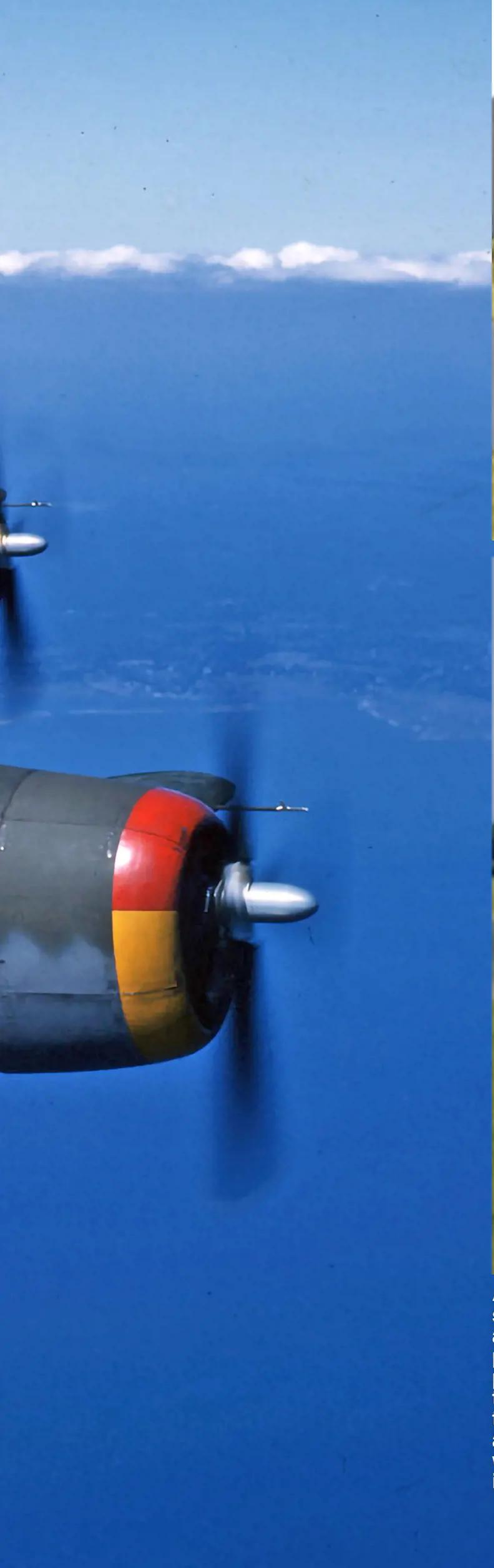
DELVING INTO THE CHALLENGE HISTORIC ARCHIVES, WE PRESENT A FURTHER SELECTION OF WORLD WAR TWO COLOR IMAGES

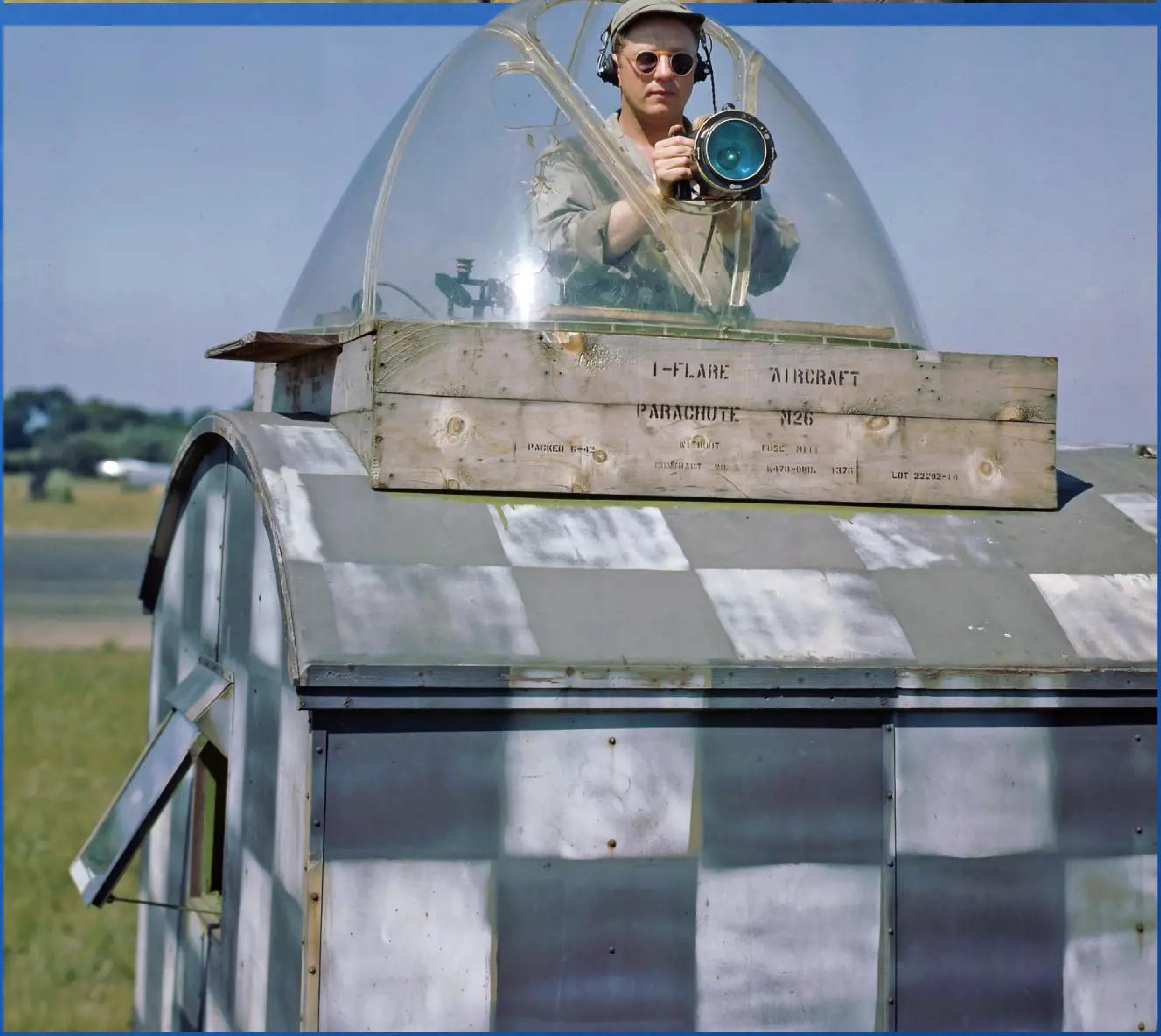
BY MICHAEL O'LEARY



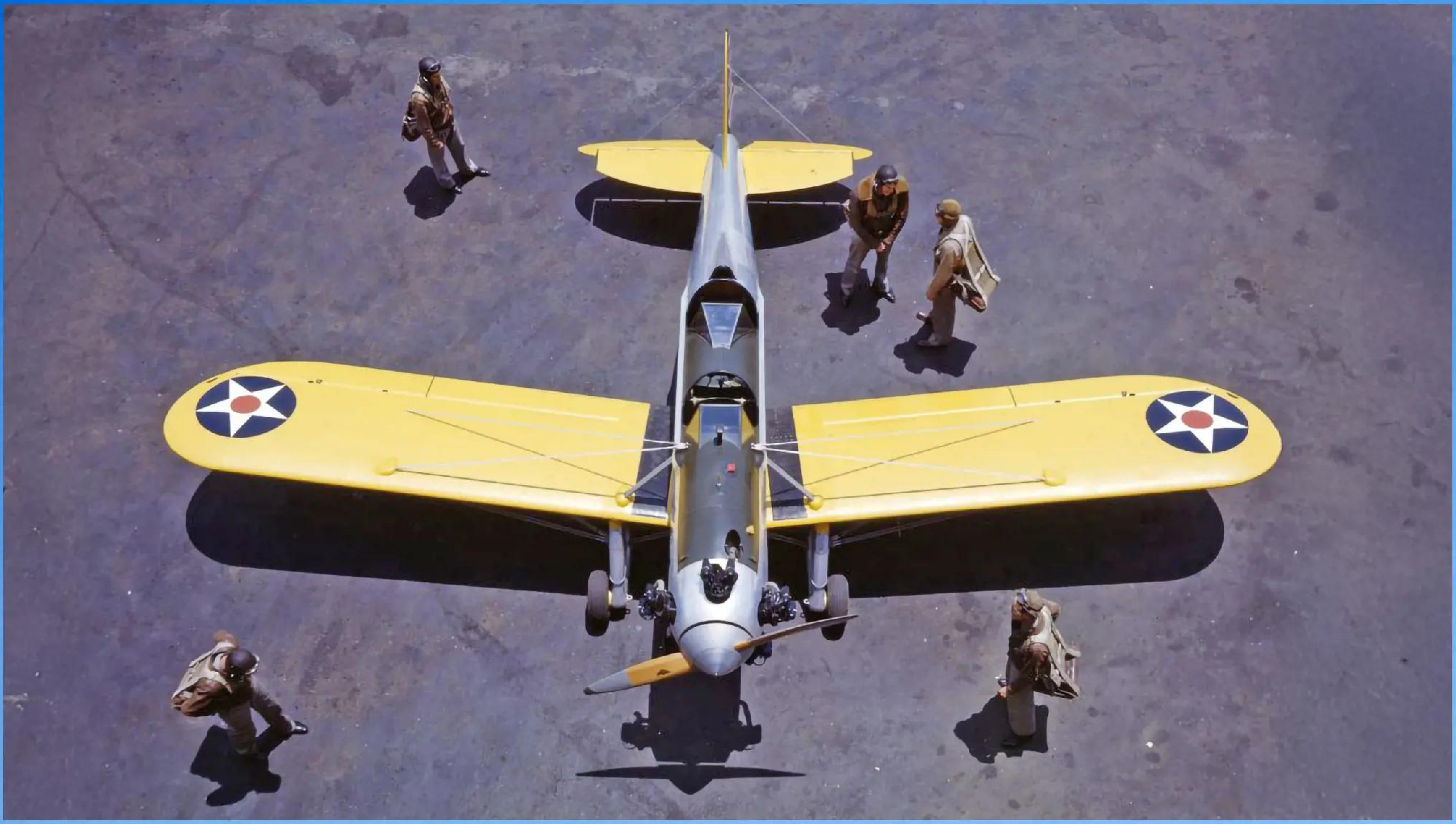
Few World War Two single-engine fighters were more imposing in sheer physicality than the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt. It took some development and the aircraft did not start to become combat operational until the P-47C. Earlier variants were used to develop the type as well as train a new generation of pilots and these P-47Bs were photographed over Long Island Sound. The planes were being flown by instructors (hence the near perfect formation) and one can tell the Thunderbolts were newly completed by the flawless Olive Drab/Neutral Gray camouflage that does not yet show the wear and tear of daily operation. Lead aircraft, P-47B 41-6002, is wearing the yellow and red fuselage bands of a squadron leader and was assigned to the 56th Fighter Group prior to be shipped overseas. This plane was destroyed in an accident on 14 January 1943 at Westover Field, Massachusetts. Second Thunderbolt is 41-5999 and it was destroyed when it dove into the ground near Fire Island, New York, on 25 October 1942 after a mid-air collision with P-47B 41-6001 (the third aircraft in this formation). Fifth B model is 41-5920 and on 5 January 1944 and it went down following engine problems at Green Swamp, Wilmington, North Carolina. Wesley A. Murphy was flying the fighter and had taken off from Wilmington's Bluethenthal Field, heading to Fort Myers, Florida, but problems quickly cropped up when the right main gear leg dropped out of the well. At only 2000-ft, it appears the turbosupercharger then caught on fire. Down to just 500-ft, Murphy attempted to turn back to Wilmington but that did not work out. He belly-landed the fighter in the swamp and then crouched in the cockpit to spend the night while temperatures rapidly dropped. Searchers found him the next day and got the pilot to safety. The plane was stripped of parts by the USAAF and then burned. Over the years, the remains were vandalized and in 1995 some 14 helicopter sling loads were lifted out by a Warbird enthusiast with the goal of rebuilding the fighter. The components were moved to Bensenville, Illinois, and work began on the project but its current status is not known.

B-17F 42-3089 *Captain Eddie* of the 96th Bomb Group shares ramp space with a P-47D Thunderbolt 42-8190 flown by the 5th Emergency Rescue Squadron. The Thunderbolt carries full D-Day invasion stripes along with the in-theater yellow identification bands. The Fortress was initially assigned to the 335th Bomb Squadron, 95th Bomb Group, and was then transferred to the 338th BS, 96th BG, where it carried the coding BC*V. The Fort survived to return to the USA in January 1945.

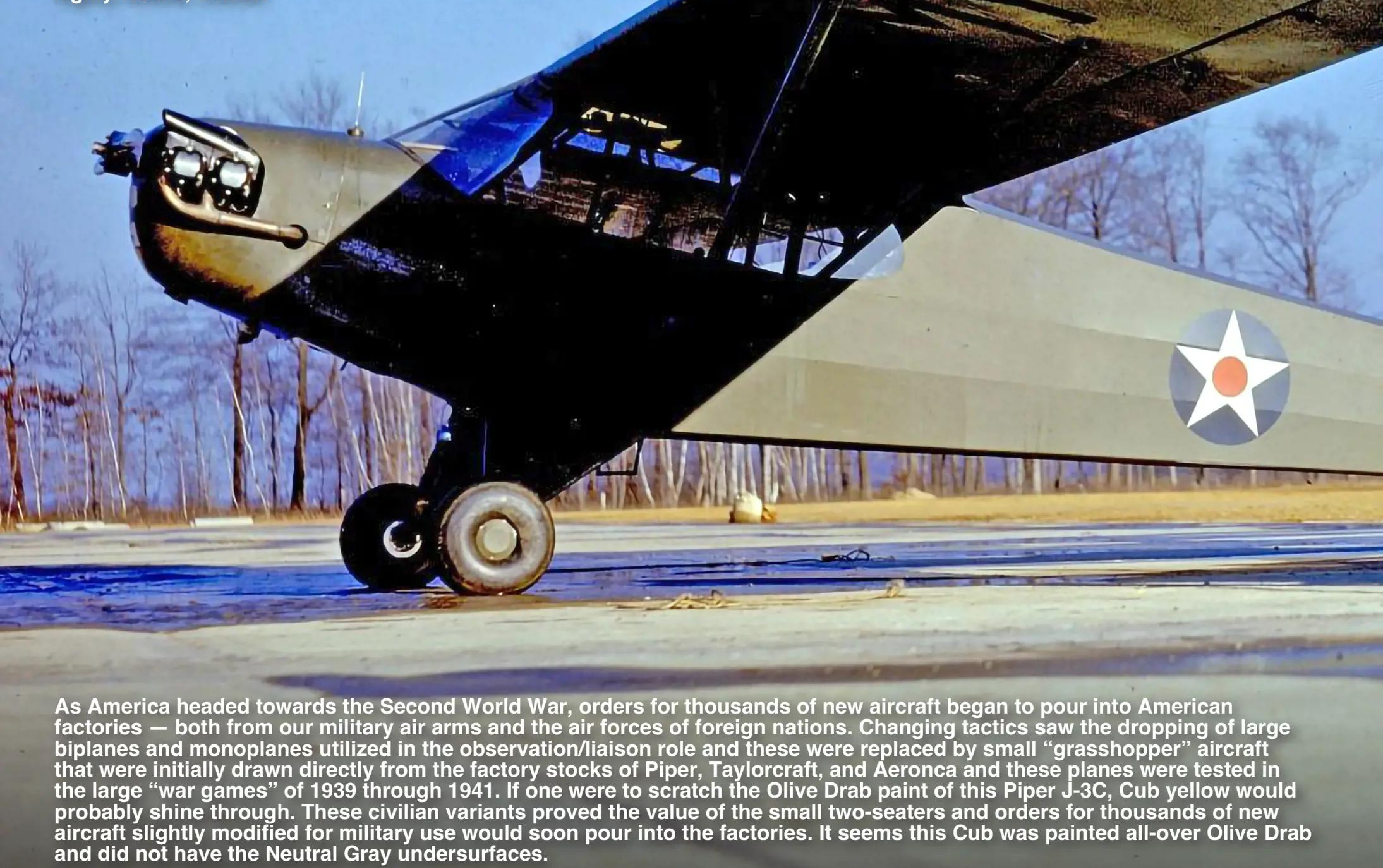




American ingenuity always gets the job done. Wanting to create a weather-proof structure that could be used as a post for signaling bombers coming back from a raid, 8th Air Force crewmen grabbed a shed, moved it to the side of a runway, painted the structure with black and white squares for visibility, and then added a packing crate that had previously held M-26 parachute flares. They cut away the top of the shed, took out the bottom of the crate, and then contoured the sides of the crate so it would match the curved structure of the hut. The top was then cut away and a surplus B-17G nose perspex was added. The flat bomb aimer's panel was then cutaway and this allowed the equipment operator to stand up and flash instructions to the incoming bomber stream.

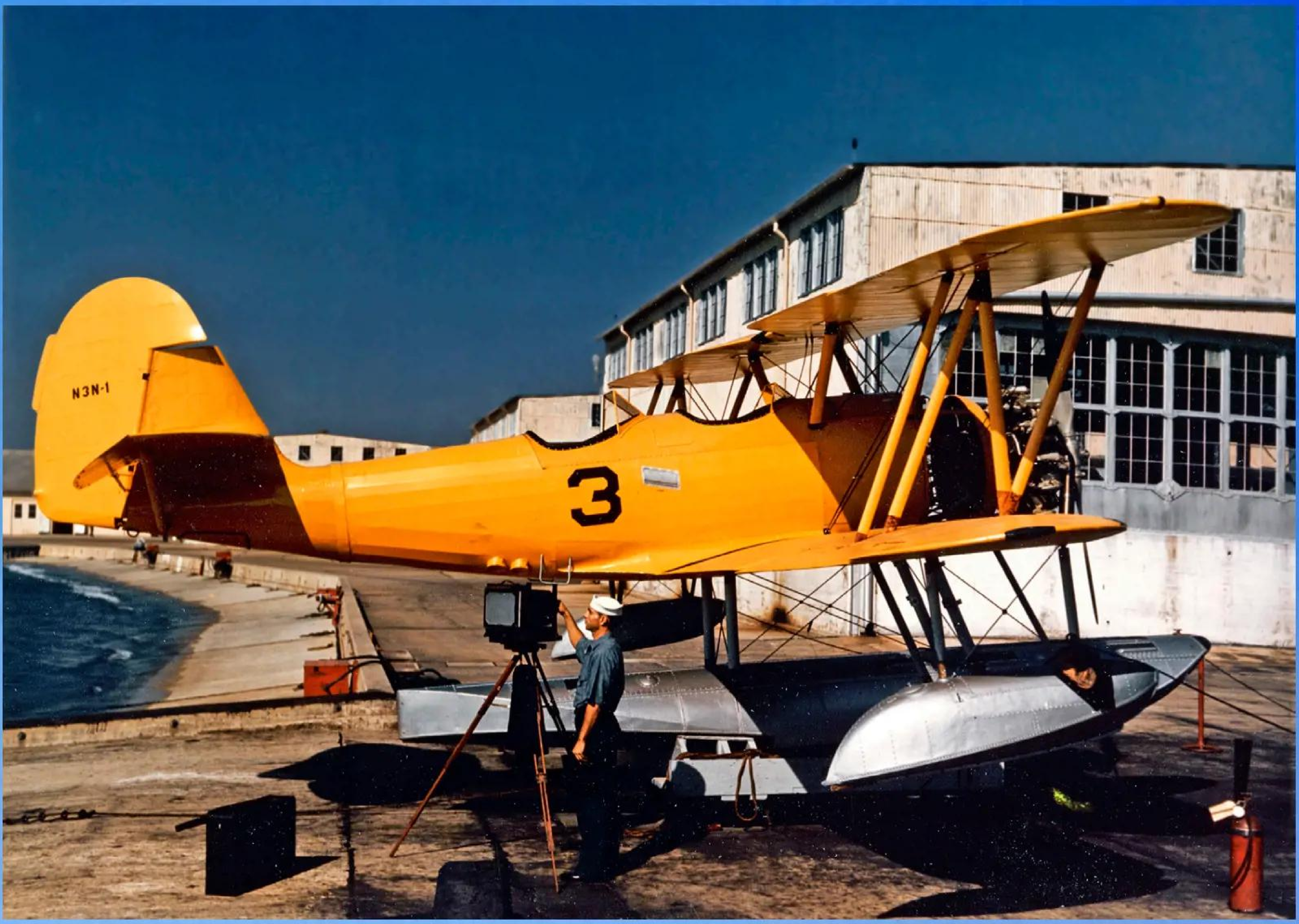


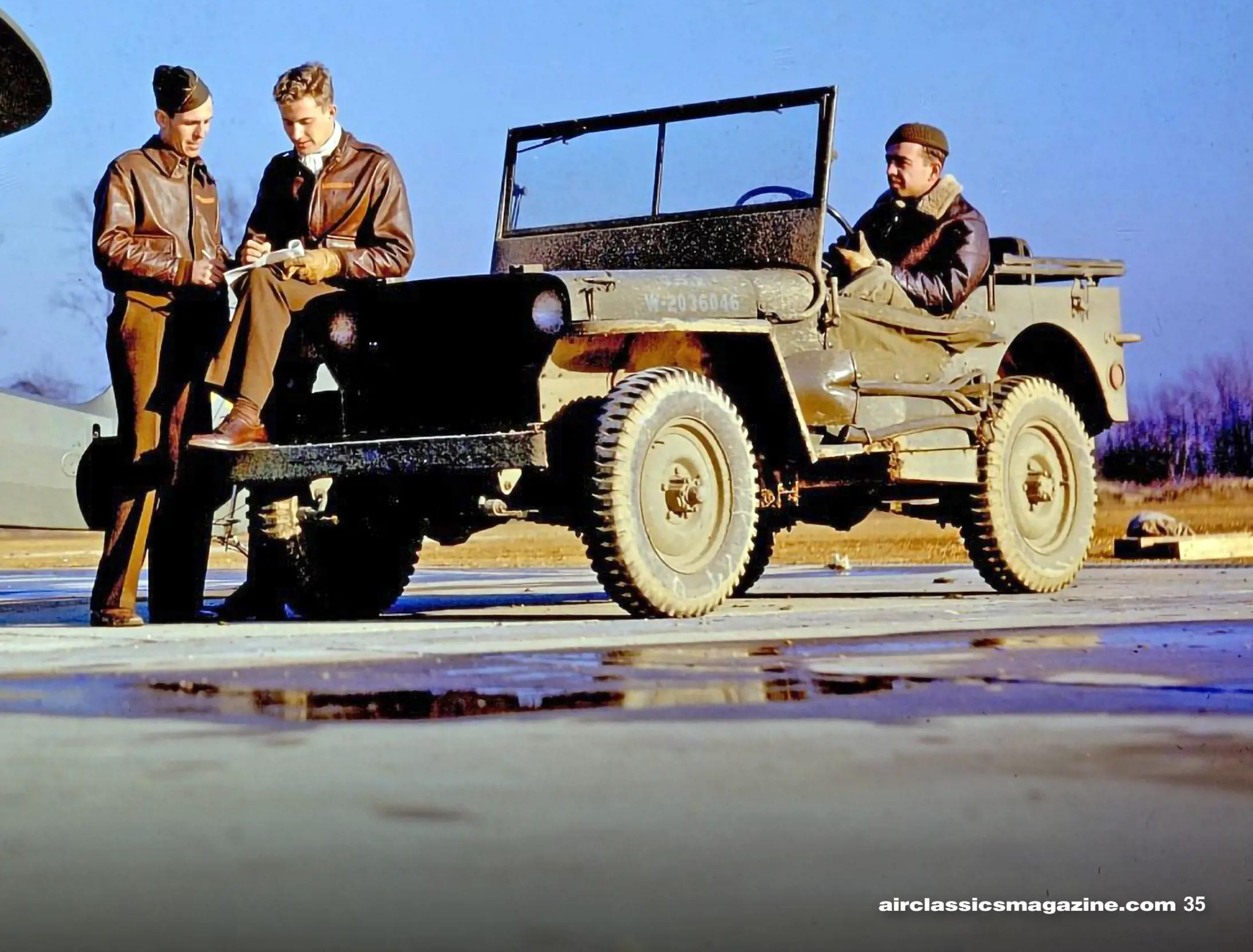
Few WWII primary training craft were more attractive than the little Ryan PT-22 Recruit. Extremely distinctive with its swept wing, unfortunately the aircraft had some really nasty traits that accounted for numerous student pilots. This set-up photo was taken on the Ryan ramp at Lindbergh Field in San Diego and illustrates not only the swept-back wing but also the fact that the fuselage longerons around the cockpits had to be placed on the outside of the craft since the cockpits were extremely tight. The PT-22s were delivered with Insignia Yellow flying surfaces and natural aluminum fuselages, making them a very attractive, and highly visible, trainer.

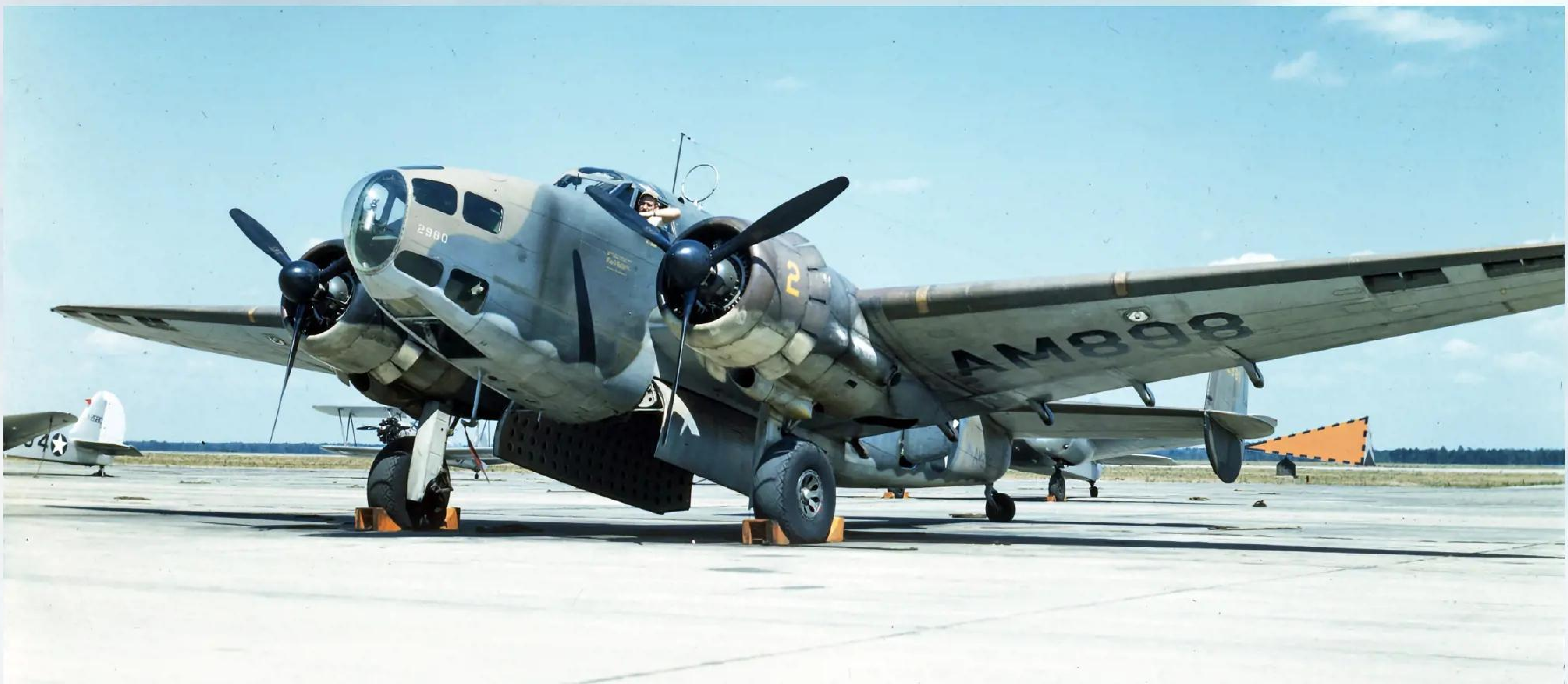


As America headed towards the Second World War, orders for thousands of new aircraft began to pour into American factories — both from our military air arms and the air forces of foreign nations. Changing tactics saw the dropping of large biplanes and monoplanes utilized in the observation/liaison role and these were replaced by small "grasshopper" aircraft that were initially drawn directly from the factory stocks of Piper, Taylorcraft, and Aeronca and these planes were tested in the large "war games" of 1939 through 1941. If one were to scratch the Olive Drab paint of this Piper J-3C, Cub yellow would probably shine through. These civilian variants proved the value of the small two-seaters and orders for thousands of new aircraft slightly modified for military use would soon pour into the factories. It seems this Cub was painted all-over Olive Drab and did not have the Neutral Gray undersurfaces.

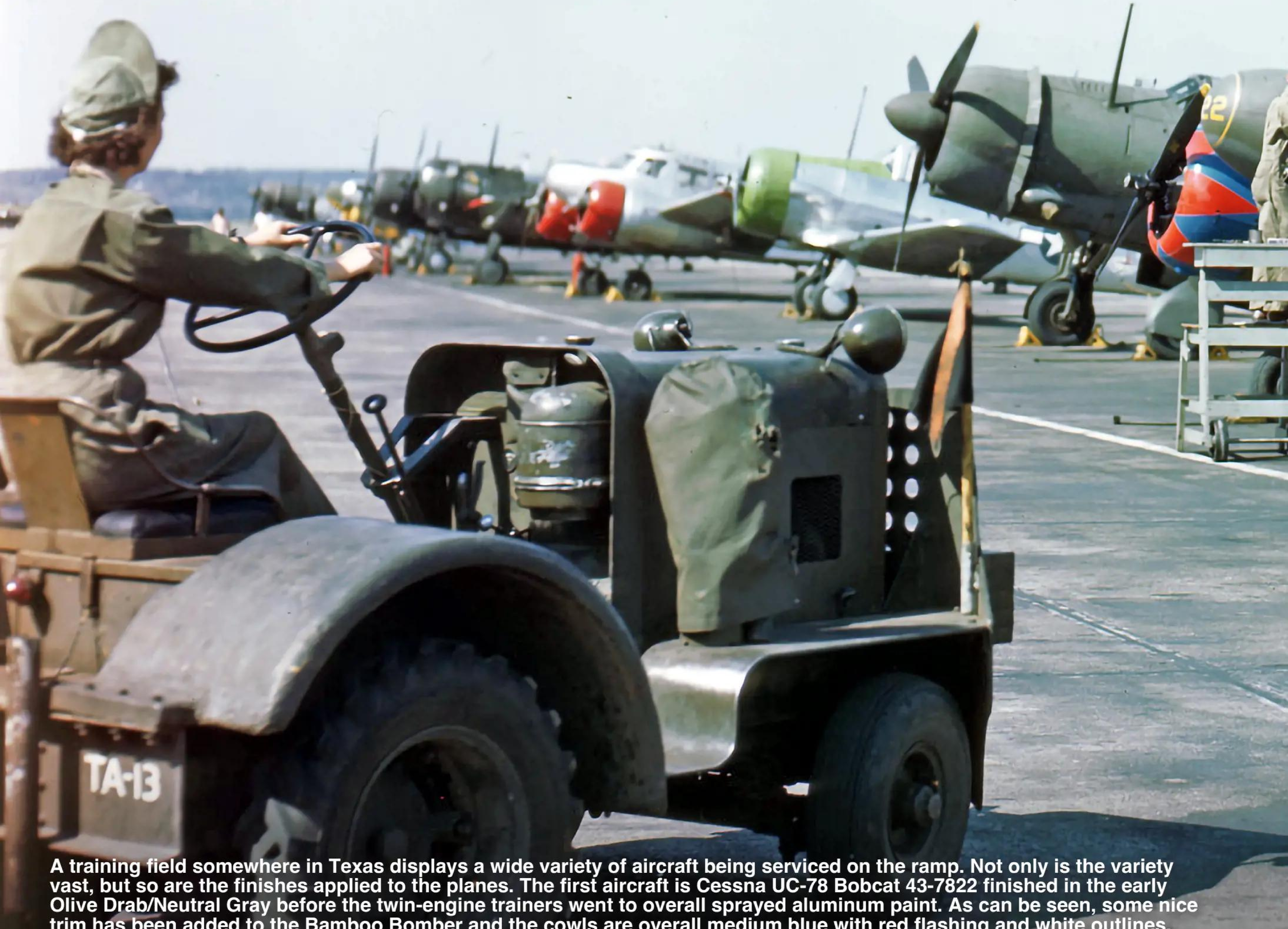
Overshadowed by the Boeing Stearman Model 75 Kaydet series of trainers, the Naval Aircraft Factory N3N-1s were extremely sturdy and hard-working trainers that taught thousands of US Navy and Marine Corps aviators. Capable of operating with land gear or floats, his N3N is particularly interesting as its sits on the seaplane ramp at NAS Pensacola. Even though it is not painted on the vertical fin as usual, the aircraft is BuNo 0265 but it is *not* an N3N-1 as painted on the rudder. To help correct some of the stability problems encountered with the N3N-1, the horizontal stabilizer was raised and an entirely new rudder was fitted (not present in this photo and replaced by a stock N3N-1 rudder). Design improvements would lead to the N3N-3.



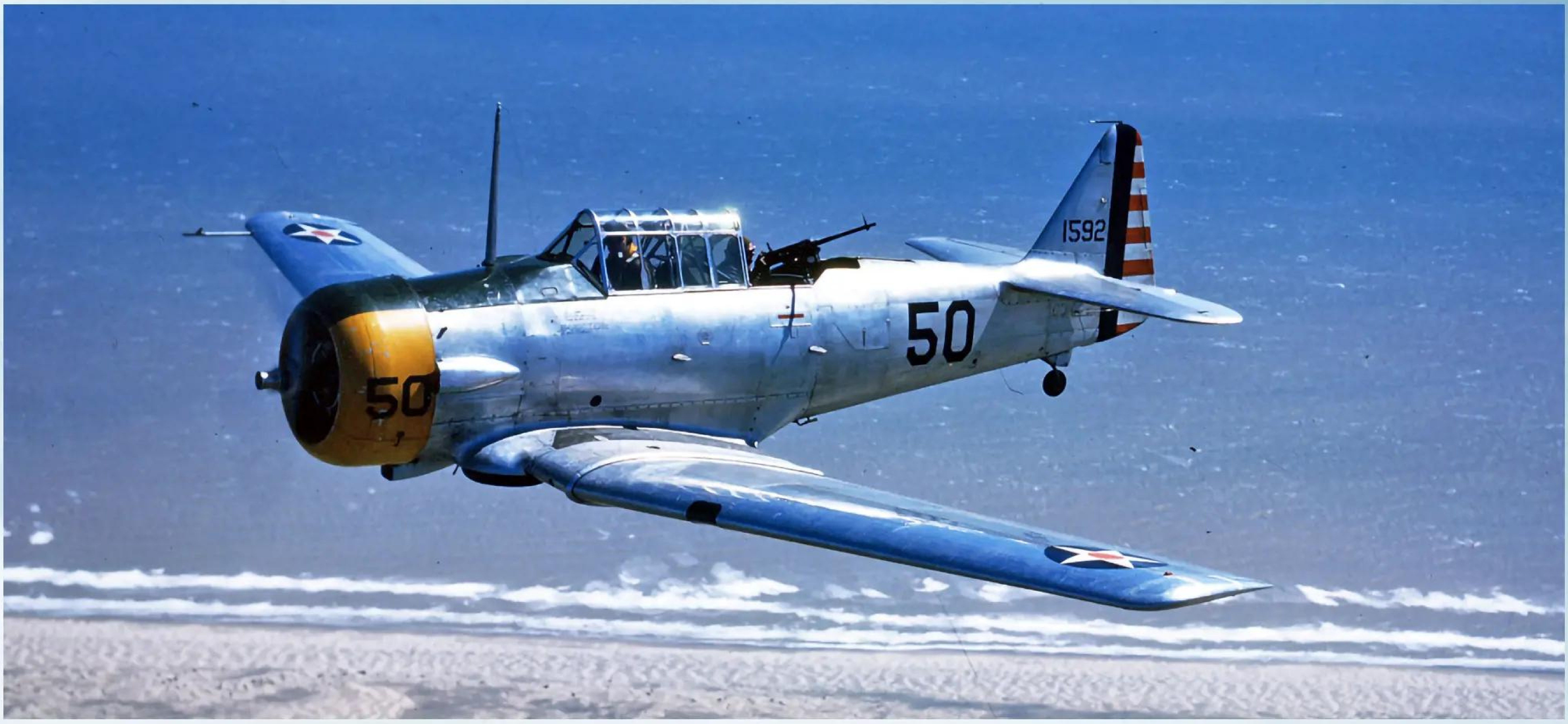




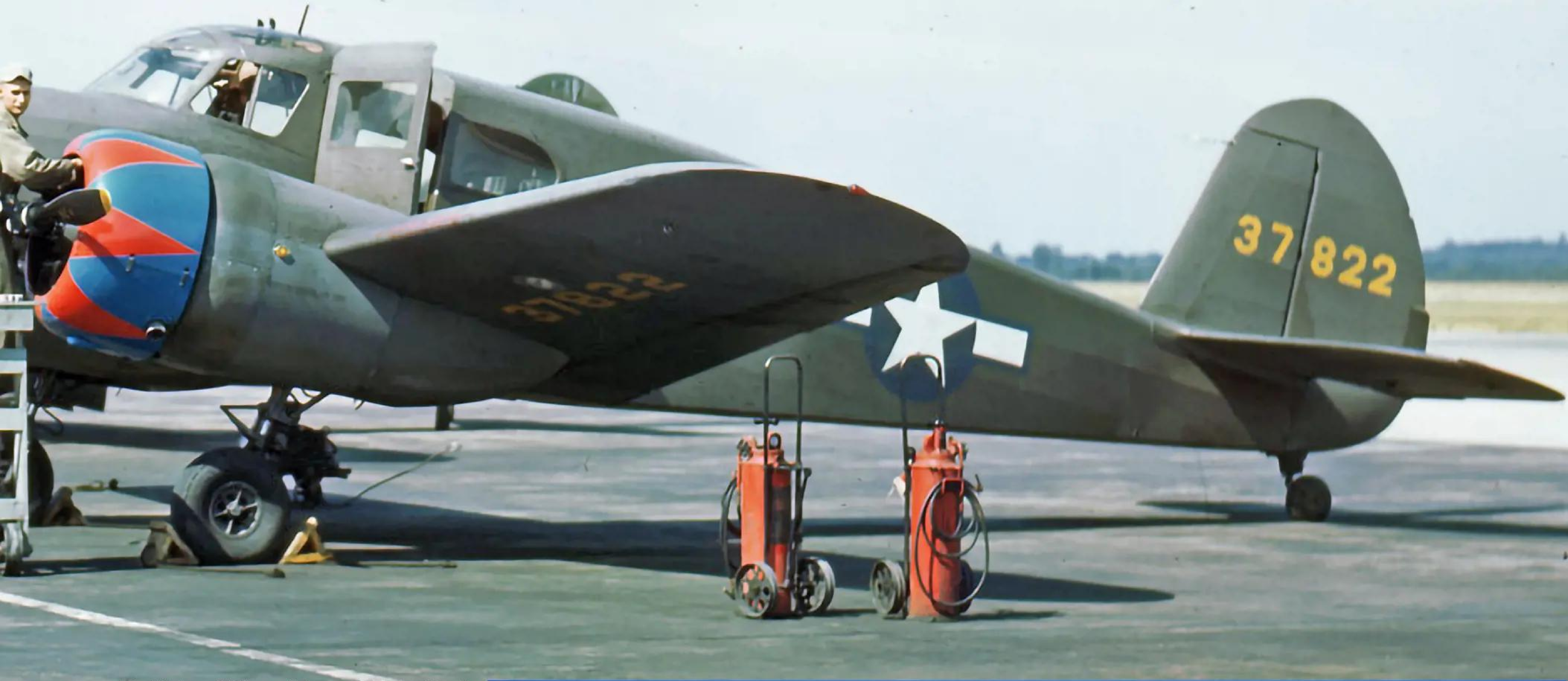
An airman leans out of the cockpit of Lockheed Hudson Mk. V c/n 2980 AM898 at a Texas training field. The USAAF took on a huge number of the twin-engine Lockheeds and most were used for trainers and hacks. The aircraft retains the RAF style camouflage and was accepted on 26 June 1941. On 8 July 1944, it was transferred to the Superior Oil Company, probably as a replacement for c/n 18-2214, which had been taken over by the USAAF.

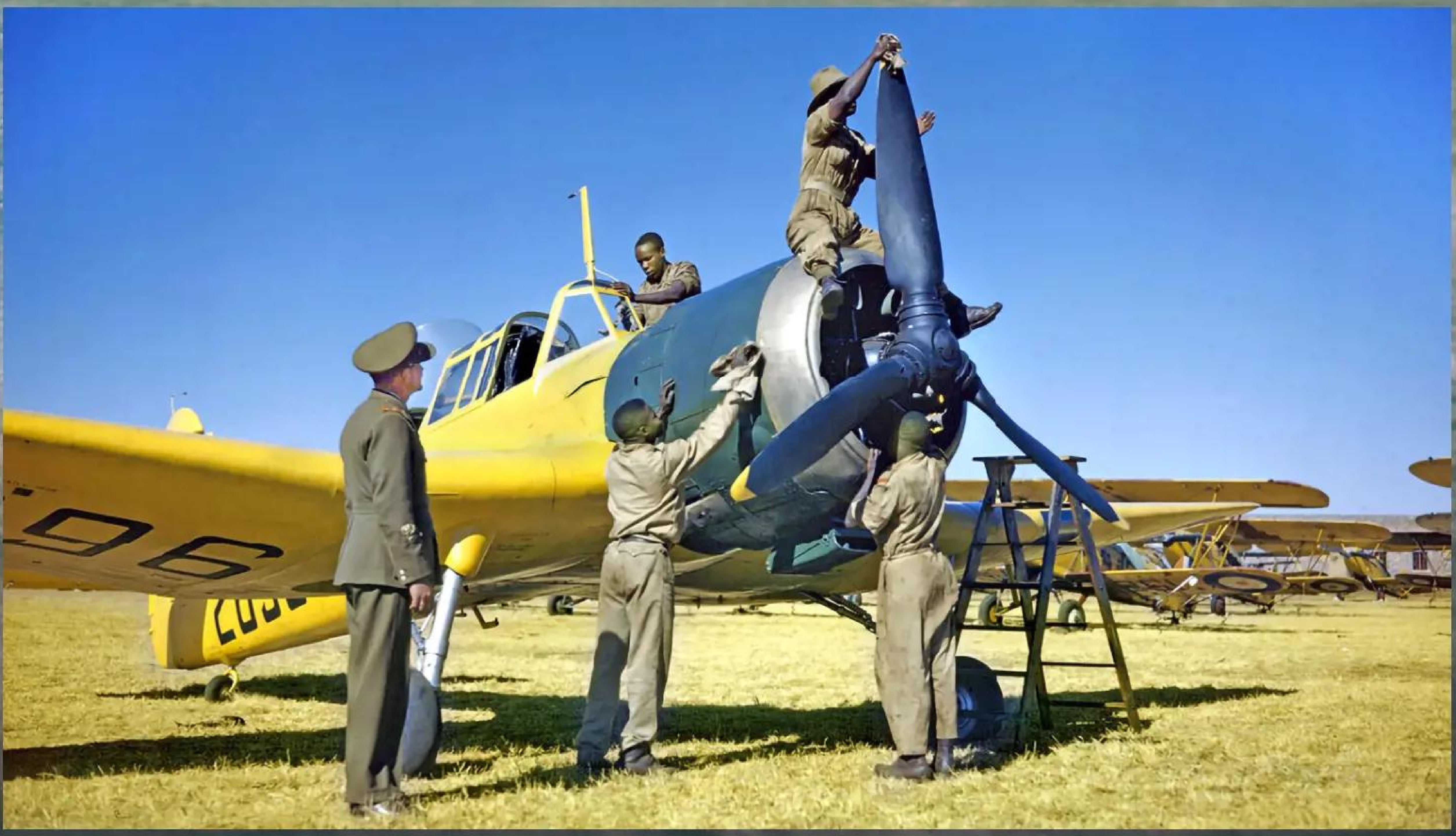


A training field somewhere in Texas displays a wide variety of aircraft being serviced on the ramp. Not only is the variety vast, but so are the finishes applied to the planes. The first aircraft is Cessna UC-78 Bobcat 43-7822 finished in the early Olive Drab/Neutral Gray before the twin-engine trainers went to overall sprayed aluminum paint. As can be seen, some nice trim has been added to the Bamboo Bomber and the cowls are overall medium blue with red flashing and white outlines. The fuselage nose cap is encircled with a yellow band and the numbers "7822," picking up the last four of the yellow serial painted on the vertical tail. All-in-all, this makes for a very attractive machine. The second plane is an Olive Drab/Neutral Gray Curtiss A-25A Shrike. Third in line is a natural metal AT-6A with a green cowl. Fourth is another Bamboo Bomber with red cowls and sprayed aluminum finish. It is followed by a variety of other aircraft that become indistinct as they merge with the background. It appears there is another Texan, another Shrike, and possibly a very rare Republic P-43A Lancer.



With his .30-caliber Browning at the ready in the backseat of North American AT-6D 41-592 *Black 50*, a student gunner prepares to fire at a towed target while the Texan was out over the Gulf of America near Harlingen Army Air Base in Texas. With its full-swivel rear seat, the AT-6D made for an idea gunnery trainer.





Built by Miles Aircraft Limited, the M.9 Master was an attempt to build an advanced training platform for the Royal Air Force, Fleet Air Arm, and Commonwealth air forces. Even though the type is not particularly well-known, some 900 Mk. I/Mk. IA trainers were built, followed by 1748 Mk. IIs, and 602 Mk. IIIs. The South African Air Force (SAAF) would obtain 426 of the twin-engine craft. Even though built in large numbers, a complete example does not exist. This SAAF aircraft, serial 2096, was photographed at a training base at Waterkloof near Pretoria during 1943. Note the line-up of retired Hawker Harts in the background. The SAAF received over 50 Harts and they were used for ground-support and general-purpose operations. **AC**

U.S. AIR FORCE
3397

With the B-52B, the Strategic Air Command now had a nuclear-equipped weapon that could strike targets deep within the Soviet Union. The B-52B was fitted with eight Pratt & Whitney J57-P-29W jets rated at 10,500-lbs-st each. The B-52B was the first variant to enter operatonal service, this taking place on 29 June 1955 with the 93rd Bomb Wing at Castle AFB in California. Fifty B-52Bs were built and 27 were capable of carrying a reconnaissance pod (as RB-52Bs).

MY MISSILE’S FIRED!

WHAT SHOULD HAVED BEEN A ROUTINE PRACTICE INTERCEPTION MISSION TURNED INTO DISASTER AS A USAF NUCLEAR BOMBER WAS BLOWN FROM THE SKY

BY ADAM STANTON

Look out! My missile’s fired!”

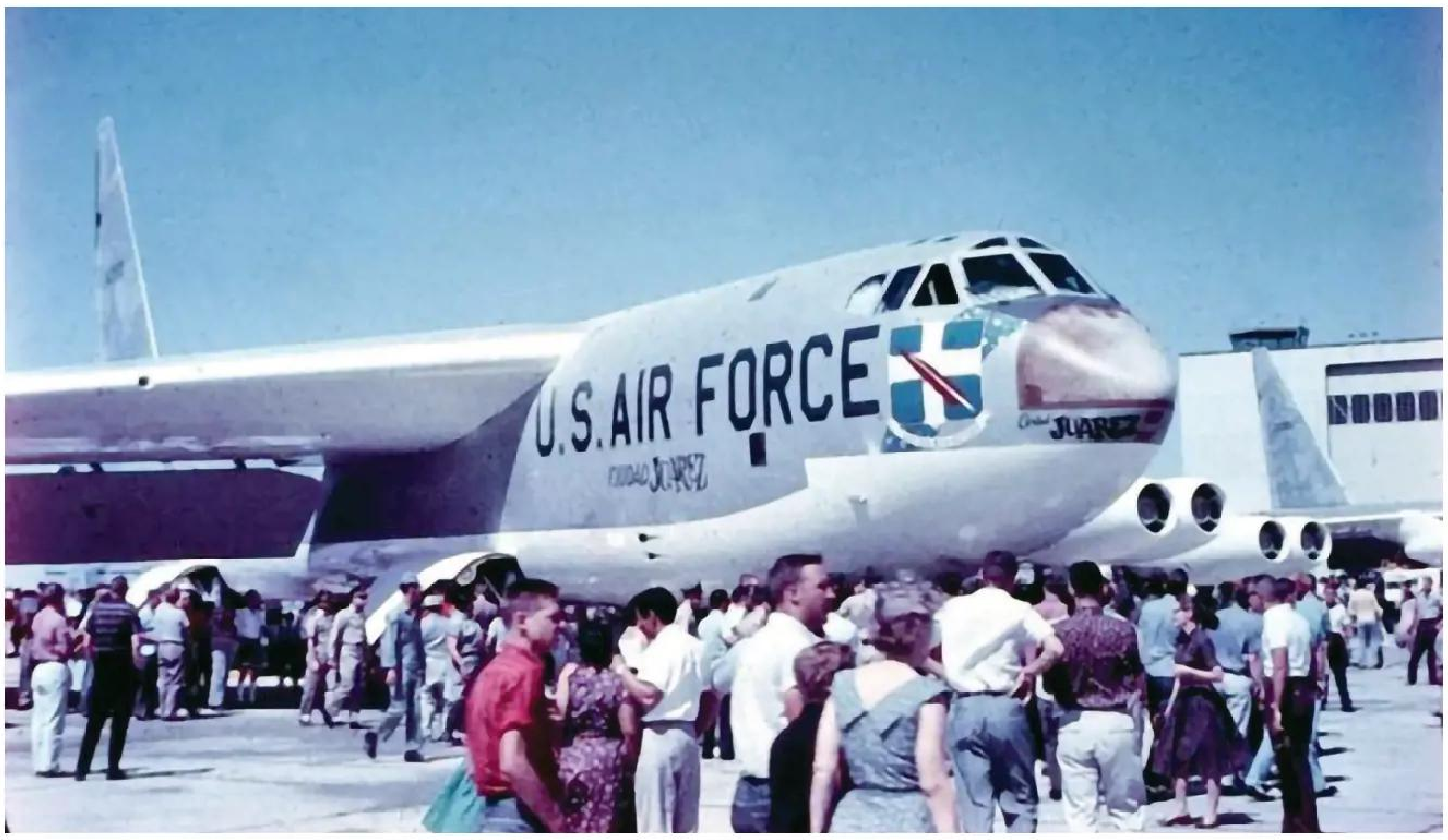
First Lieutenant James Van Scyoc was literally screaming into his oxygen mask as he watched in stunned disbelief as the pure white trail of the AIM-9 Sidewinder heat-seeking air-to-air missile blasted away from his North American F-100A Super Sabre.

Wingman and fellow New Mexico Air National Guard pilot Capt. Dale Dodd saw the missile leave the gleaming silver fighter and ferociously leap ahead of the two interceptors, its blazing yellow cone of fire propelling the weapon faster and faster.

The advanced fighters were part of the 188th Fighter Squadron, NM ANG, and part of their assignment was to provide air defense against Soviet bombers heading over the western United States. Their A model Super Sabres had been retired from front-line USAF service and passed on to the ANG. When they arrived at the 188th, the aircraft were given all the latest F-100 upgrades and also had rocket rails added that would carry the new and very effective AIM-9B Sidewinder that would augment the fighter’s regular armament of four 20mm cannon. The F-100A was a matter of pride for the unit since New Mexico was the first ANG squadron to receive the type and the crew chiefs lavished hundreds of hours of care on their planes to make sure they were not only operationally perfect but also in gleaming condition.

JUSTICE WITH VICTORY

Flight jacket insignia for the 95th Bomb Wing.



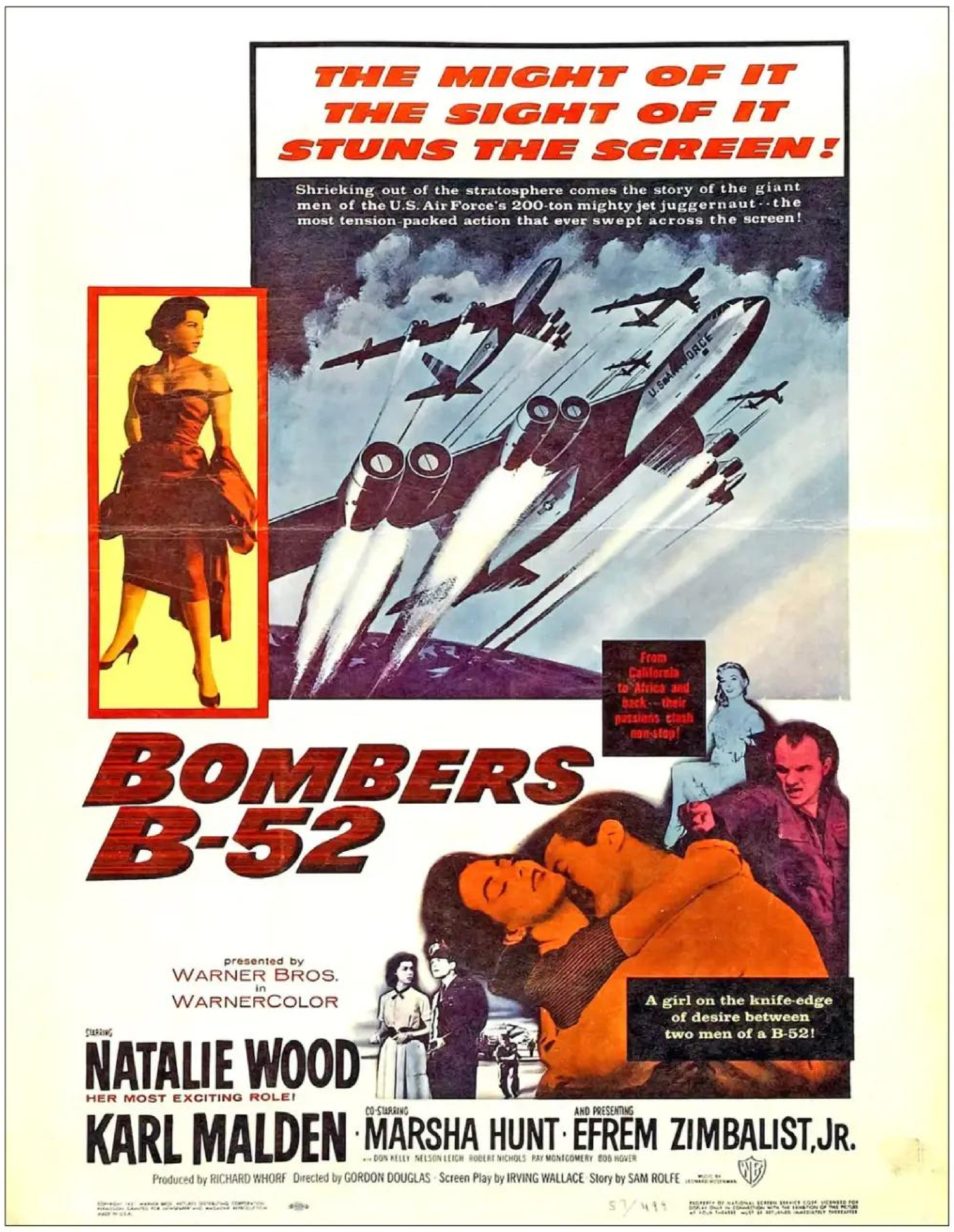
***Ciudad Juarez* on display at Biggs AFB. The name was painted in large script on the fuselage above the anti-flash gloss white paint that was added in the hope of repelling some of the intense heat from an atomic explosion.**

The day had started off bleak. On the ground, the weather was awful with a raging blizzard as the two fighters taxied towards the active. With preflight checks completed, the pilots advanced their throttles into afterburner and the F-100As rapidly accelerated through the snowy gloom. They weren't on their own. The fighters were carefully being guided by experienced ground controllers who took the pair through heavy clouds and turbulence in a rapid climb, popping out at about 30,000 feet.

Van Scyoc was flying as lead on a standard New Mexico ANG training mission that was being held in conjunction with the massive Boeing B-52B-30-BO 53-0380 assigned to the 95th Bomb Wing of the elite Strategic Air Command. As typical of SAC, a complete and detailed briefing had been held the previous day so that nothing would come as a surprise on the day of the actual mission, 7 April 1961.

Flying out of Biggs Air Force base near El Paso, the bomber had the name *Ciudad Juarez* emblazoned in large script on its nose in honor of El Paso's neighboring Mexican "sister" city. For the day's mission, Capt. Don Blodgett was Aircraft Commander and in the left seat and he instructed his seasoned crew that the Stratofortress would not be carrying any form of bomb or nuclear weapon but would be making a mock attack on several targets while the F-100As of the NM ANG would be seeking them out and, if discovered, the Super Sabres were going to make a number of practice firing passes but, of course, there would be no actual firing of either the fighters' cannon or Sidewinder missiles.

The New Mexico ANG had a long and proud history going back to when it was federally recognized as the 188th Fighter Bomber Squadron on 7 July 1947. At that time, the 188th was equipped with a utility flight of Douglas B-26 Invaders, 25 North American F-51D (then F-51H) Mustangs, and three T-6 Texan trainers. The squadron comprised 100 officers and enlisted men and was a tight, well-organized group. In 1948, the designation was changed to 188th Fighter Interceptor Squadron.


THE MIGHT OF IT
THE SIGHT OF IT
STUNS THE SCREEN!

Shrieking out of the stratosphere comes the story of the giant men of the U.S. Air Force's 200-ton mighty jet juggernaut--the most tension-packed action that ever swept across the screen!

From California to Africa and back--their passions clash non-stop!

BOMBERS B-52

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A girl on the knife-edge of desire between two men of a B-52!

STARRING
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HER MOST EXCITING ROLE!
KARL MALDEN · CO-STARRING MARSHA HUNT · AND PRESENTING EFREM ZIMBALIST, JR.
with DON KELLY NELSON LEIGH ROBERT NICHOLS RAY MONTGOMERY BOB HOVER
Produced by RICHARD WHORF Directed by GORDON DOUGLAS · Screen Play by IRVING WALLACE Story by SAM ROLFE

57/499

For the USAF and indeed the American public, the addition of the B-52B to the nation's inventory of weapons to prevent a Soviet attack was a big deal at the time of the plane's introduction. The 1957 film *Bombers B-52* further added to the fame that the B-52B was gaining — even though the movie was pretty awful. The USAF made sure the new bomber got as much public exposure as possible.

The squadron was called to active duty in December 1950 because of the expanding Korean War and 54 officers and 400 airmen traveled to Long Beach Airport in southern California where most were absorbed by other USAF units and dispatched to Japan. The pilots would see some heavy action and 1st Lts. Robert Lucas and Joseph Murray were killed while performing close air support missions. On the plus side, Capt. Francis Williams and 1st Lt. Robert Sands each destroyed three MiG 15s. The unit was released from federal duty in November 1952 and the men returned to New Mexico. The NM ANG pilots had flown 1411 combat missions.

U.S. AIR FORCE
Ciudad JUAREZ

Members of the press are given a tour of *Ciudad Juarez* at Biggs AFB.

The North American F-100 gave the USAF the interceptor it needed to tackle possible Soviet nuclear bomber attacks on the USA. However, the early F-100s suffered from numerous problems. This YF-100A was photographed during flight tests. Modifications would cure many, but not all, of the type's problems. The F-100A was phased out of USAF service in favor of newer models and many As were passed onto the Air National Guard.

Trading in their Mustangs for Lockheed F-80C Shooting Stars and then F-86 Sabres, in 1957 the "Enchilada Air Force" became the 150th Tactical Fighter Group. One of the pilots was former 100th Bomb Group B-17G pilot and future Warbird collector David Tallichet. During January 1958, the unit was particularly honored when it was selected to receive the F-100A — the first Air National Guard unit to receive the potent Super Sabre. In March of that year, two two-seat F-100Fs arrived for training purposes and they were followed by a mass flight of a dozen F-100As in April. This meant an increase in personnel to 956 officers and airmen. As with all ANG units, the crew chiefs soon had their used F-100As in highly-polished condition with a high rate of readiness.

However, it should be noted that the A model Super Sabre was far from a success and considerable redesign work had to be undertaken before the USAF would accept the type but that is out of the scope of this article.

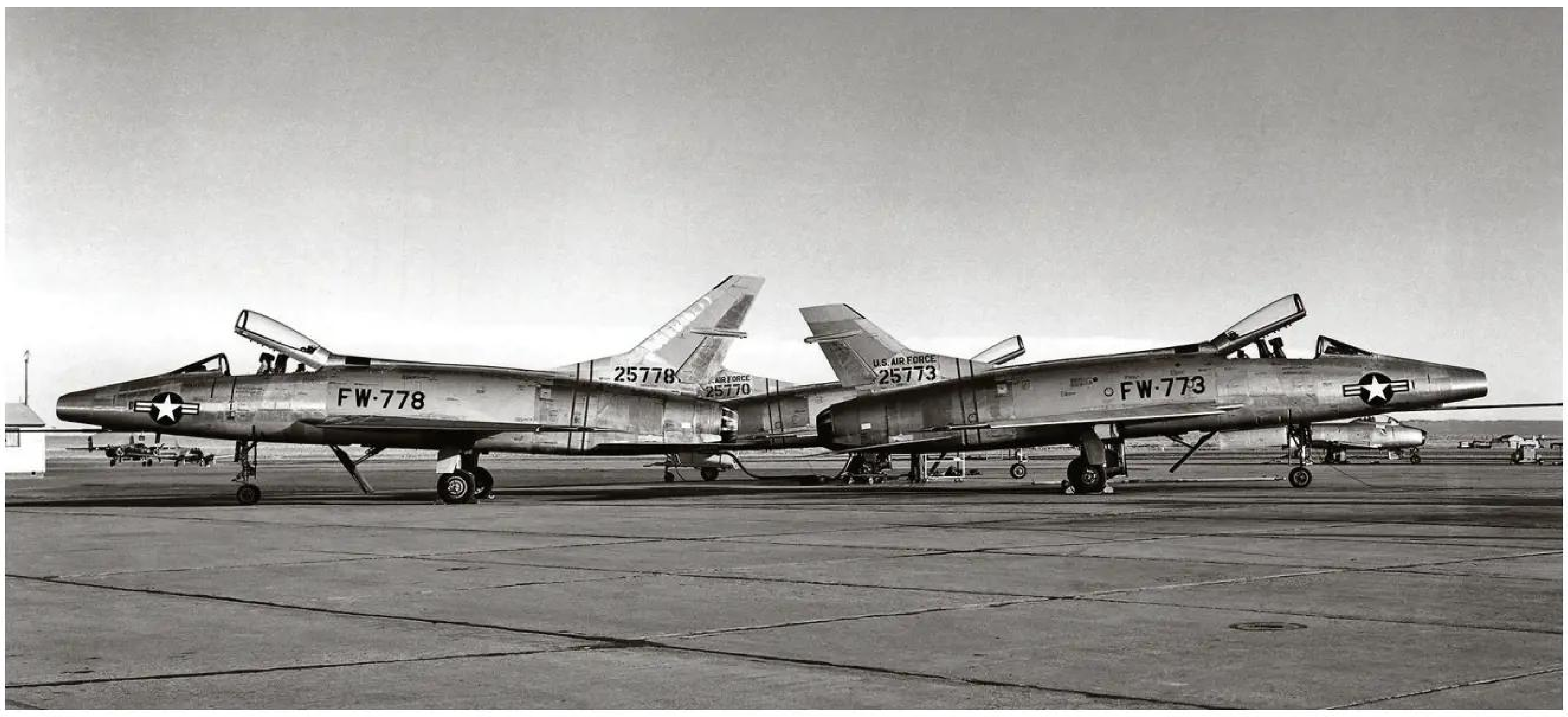
The high-performance Super Sabres were ideal for the mock intercepts since they had enough performance to rapidly climb to the Stratofortresses' operating altitudes. Using their own radar and assistance from ground control, Capt. Dodd first spotted their "target" above them at 34,000 feet and called a "Tally Ho!"

Climbing above the B-52, the F-100As set up for their firing passes. The fighters and the bomber were actually on two separate missions. The F-100s would get some excellent intercept practice while the B-52B would head on for a simulated nuclear strike on an American city. For the Air Force, it was getting two missions done for the price of one.

In the tail of the massive bomber, S/Sgt. Ray Singleton swung this two radar-directed 20mm cannon in an arc that would guarantee the fighters would run into some extreme opposition. Even though it was practice with friendly fighters, Singleton felt the apprehension that all gunners feel — it was his mission to protect his bomber and his crew. He had done this before and he knew the Super Sabres were carrying live Sidewinders but he also knew the safety protocol was rigorous and that just the heat-seeker portion of the deadly missile was activated during the intercept runs. Toggle switches on the firing boards in the cockpits were in the non-firing position while an additional circuit breaker was also off, the warhead of the missile could only lock on to a target and a launch was theoretically impossible — or so it was reasoned.

Aboard the B-52B, Capt. Blodgett did not like these intercepts but he knew they were essential to the overall USAF mission. On this particular flight, *Ciudad Juarez* was not carrying nuclear weapons but it often did.

Using assistance from ground control, the F-100As made five tail-chase attacks in the Sidewinder mode followed by simulated 20mm cannon passes, Van Scyoc, who was also the 188th's Safety Officer, hauled his Super Sabre around for a final Sidewinder practice firing pass as he turned into the contrails being dragged



Stability problems beset early F-100As and this photo shows an F-100A with the original small tail on the right and a modified aircraft with the larger vertical on the left.

NM ANG
ANG
25756
NM ANG
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0-5710
ANG

The 188th Fighter Squadron of the New Mexico Air National Guard was the first ANG unit to receive the Super Sabre. However, the ANG crew chiefs had to put in lots of manhours to get the planes combat ready.

by the B-52's engines. Relaxing the turn and feeling the G forces drop, Van Scyoc heard the distinctive tone letting him know that the heat-seeker had found and locked on to its target. He also radioed Dodd and said that this was the last pass since fuel was getting critical. So far, everything was normal.

Then there was a distinct thump as his No. 2 AIM-9B left its rail and headed for the Superfortress, which was looming ahead of fighter.

From his left seat, Blodgett recalled, "I heard Van Scyoc call, 'Look out. My missile's fired!' We were on autopilot and I grabbed the controls just as the Sidewinder hit. There was a tremendous shudder and the aircraft banked left steeply. Then, the electrical panel on the right side of the cockpit began burning. Now in a 90-degree bank, my copilot, Capt. Ray Obel, ejected without warning. In all the confusion I didn't realize he had gone.

"I tried to reach the alarm bell between the two seats to order the crew to bail out while holding the controls with my left hand to maintain full right aileron and rudder. I didn't realize the left wing was gone."

Crew chief S/Sgt. Manuel A. Mieras was perched on the crew ladder between the two pilots. The sudden explosive decompression sucked Mieras off his ladder, propelled him through the cockpit and then blew him out of the missing hatch above the copilot's position mangling his legs in the process.

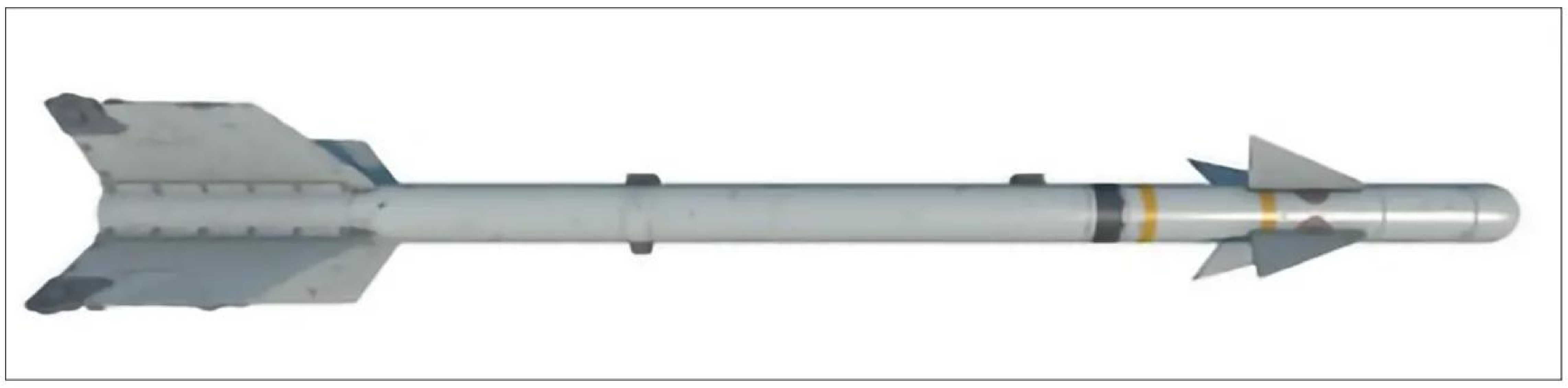
"The aircraft wasn't responding at all," continued Blodgett. "It began to spin down into the clouds and I still wasn't sure that I had hit the alarm [Mieras would later state that he saw the red alarm light]. With G-forces building up tremendously, pinning me to my seat, I could not raise my right hand from its position near the bail-out alarm but could move it sideways to the ejection handle. The hatch fired and the seat threw me up 50 feet with the B-52B at 600 knots.

"The slipstream tore off my helmet as I left the aircraft. There was another explosion and I went through a ball of fire — it felt like being in an oven. Immediately after that, I went through a 'bath' of JP-4 fuel as the fuel tanks had broken up in this second explosion. At least this put out the fire but I was now soaking wet with fuel and still in the ejection seat. Assuming a seat malfunction [I was later told I was holding on to it] I reached out to unfasten the lap belt when suddenly I flew out of the seat.

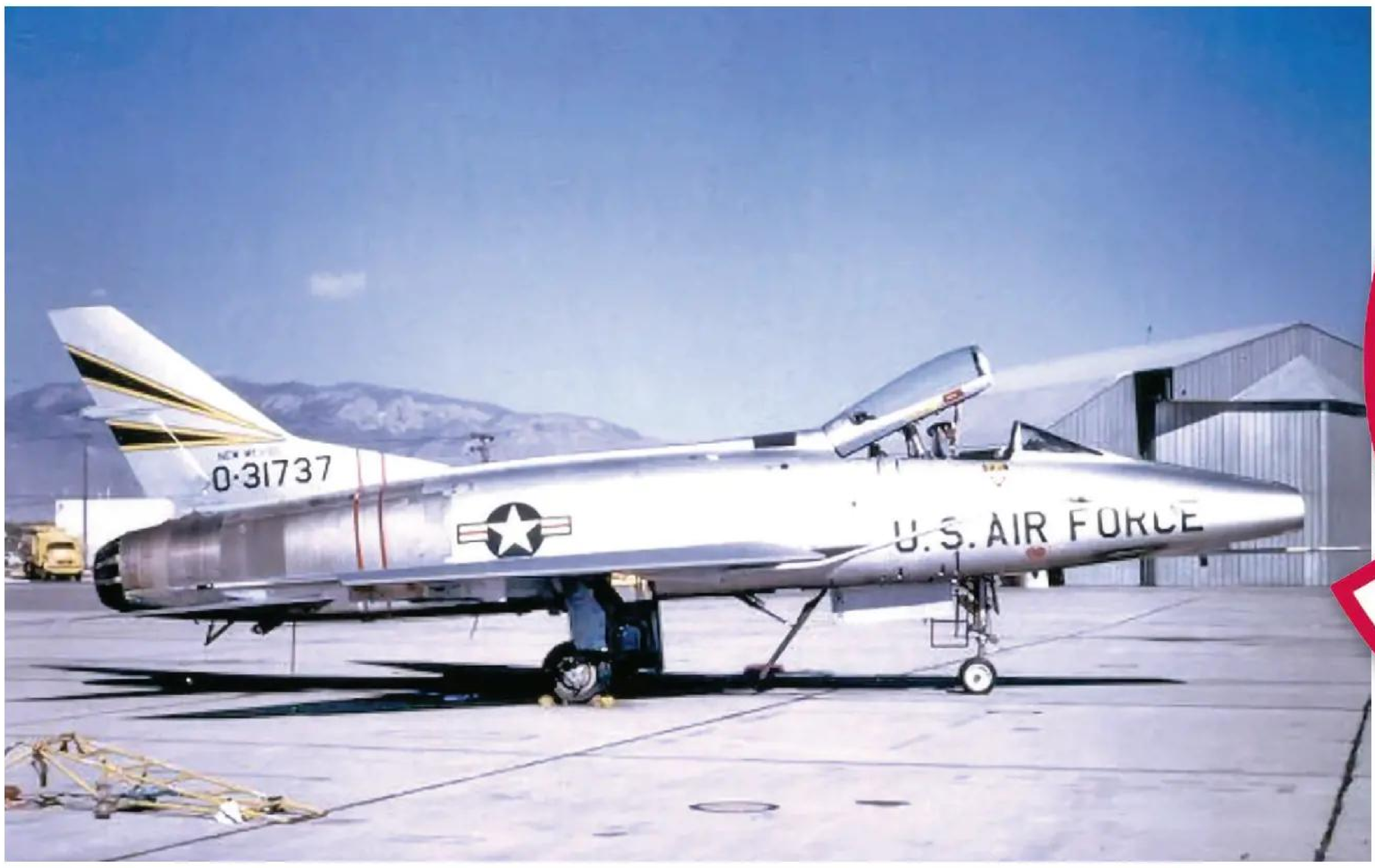
"However, the interphone cord wrapped around my left so now I was going down through the clouds with a 650-pound seat hooked to my leg. I thought it would rip my leg off and I managed to claw the cord free. By now I was falling in a cloud of debris — and a blizzard. I released by survival gear pack, which also automatically released the survival raft. This was suspended about 40 feet below me and, with all the updrafts in the clouds due to the bad weather, it acted like a sail — pulling me around in a 180-degree arc. I thought if I hit the ground sideways, this is it!

U.S. AIR FORCE
31576
FW-576

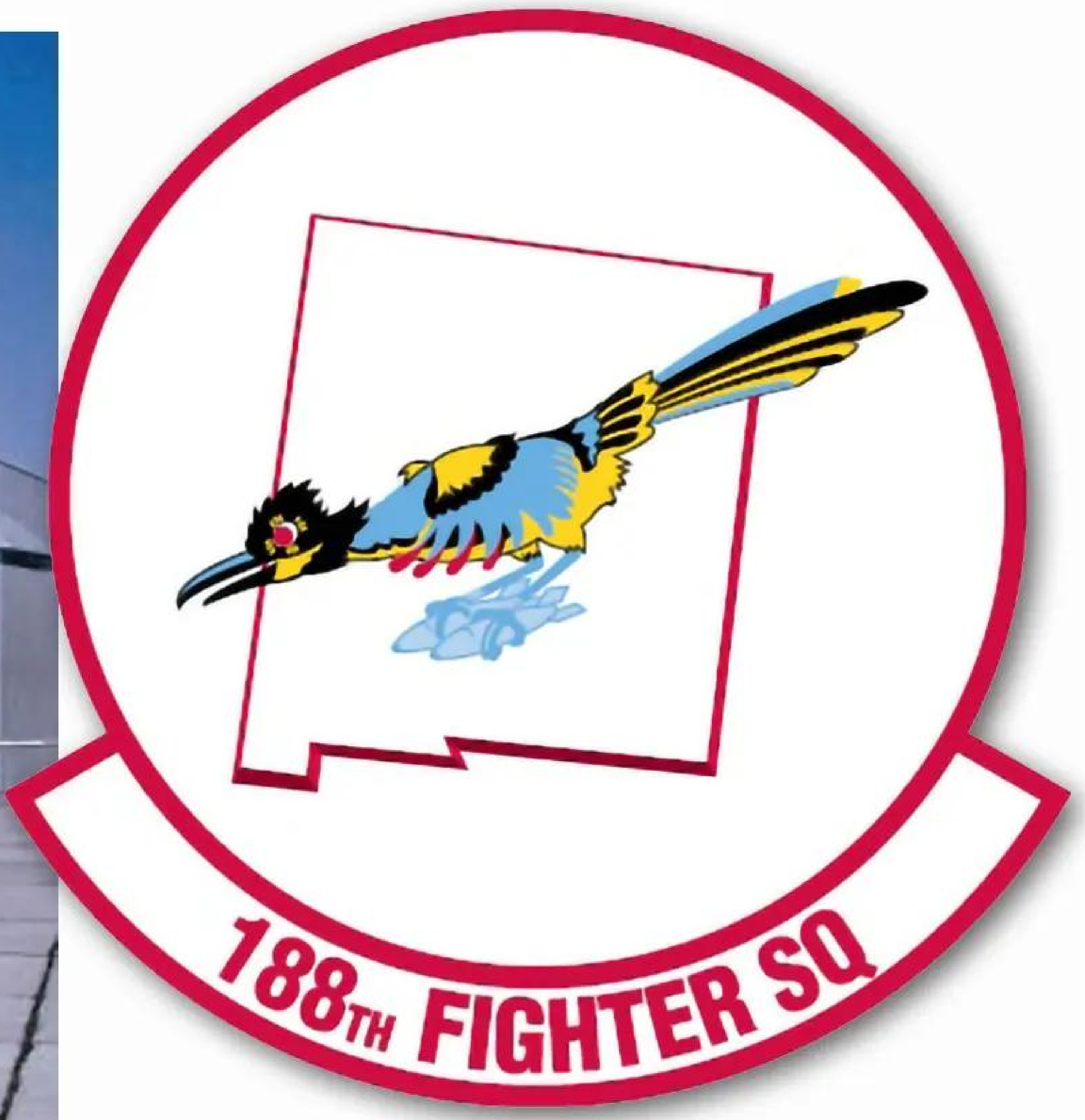
F-100A 53-1576 being tested with the AIM-9B Sidewinder installation.



Although the Sidewinder proved to be an effective weapon, it should be noted that the 452 Sidewinders fired during the Vietnam War resulted in only an 18% kill probability.



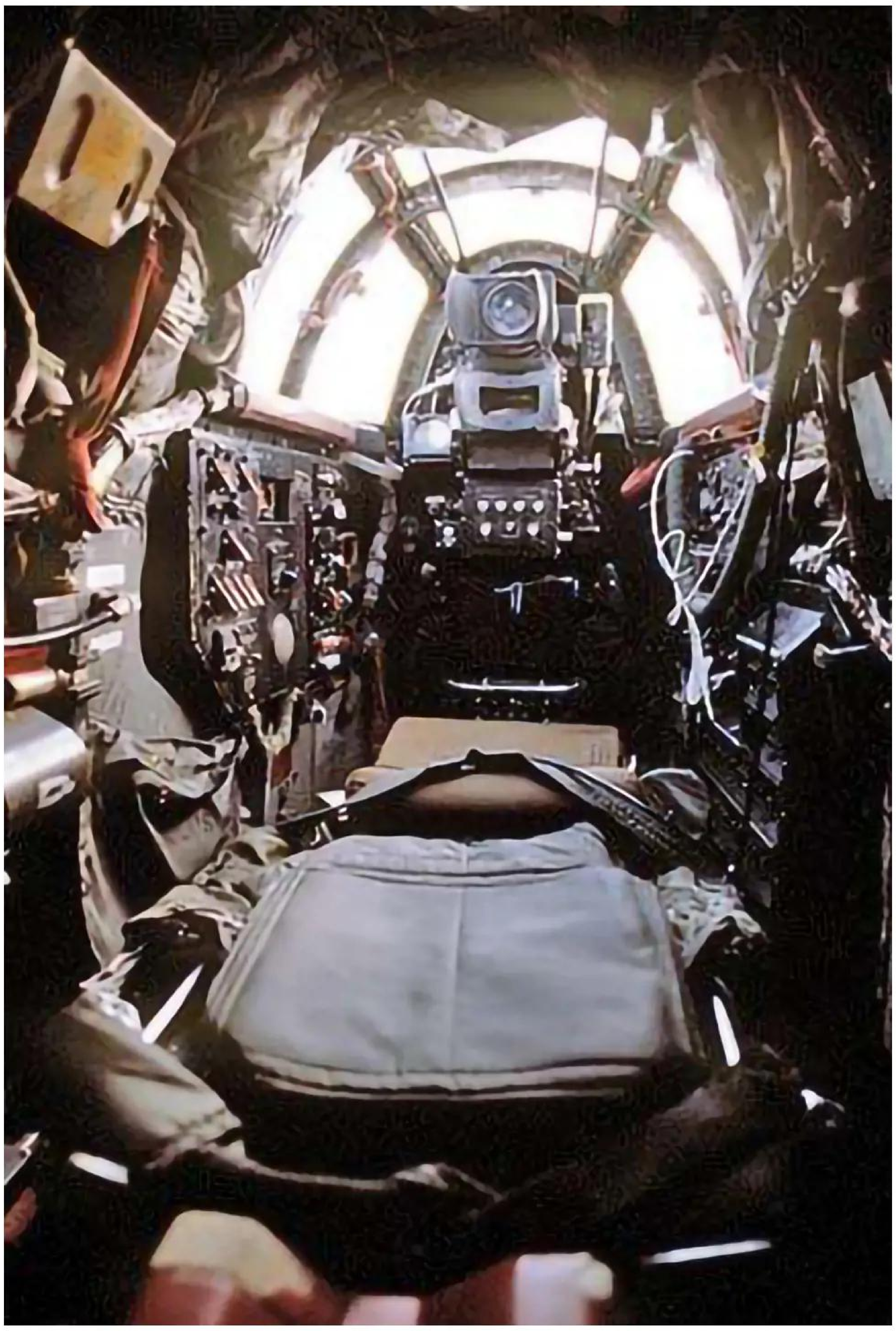
F-100A of the 188th FS NM ANG.



Insignia for the 188th Fighter Squadron.

I couldn't get to my knife to cut it free but I soon got out of the turbulence and began to fall straight.

"When I ejected, my left arm hit the hatch putting a big gash in my arm. Blood was pouring out of this and I was holding it with my right hand, trying to stop the bleeding. Suddenly, I saw something white and I hit the ground in a downward swing of my parachute with a 30-knot wind. It felt like jumping off a two-story building. I hit so hard that everything in my survival kit — the radio, mirrors, etc. — was broken apart from the survival rifle. My original intentions were to get the radio going and tell that fighter pilot what I thought of him!"



Tail gunner's position in the B-52B. The gunner's seat was relatively complex and it was have to be put in the flat position to allow the gunner ingress and egress from the position. In the case of an emergency, a handle could be pulled that would jettison the guns and turret mechanism. The gunner would then have to push himself into the opening to escape from the bomber.

Later, Blodgett would reveal more thoughts about his distrust of the mock intercepts and wondered what would have happened if they had been carrying nuclear weapons.

"I thought everyone was dead except me," recalled the captain. "I was still soaked in JP-4. With a 30-knot wind and a still air temperature of 30-degF, I was cold! I tried to stand but when I put weight on my right foot, there was excruciating pain. I found later that I had knocked a two-inch piece out of my pelvis. Also, when I hit the ground, I landed on my left arm. There were cactus and pine needles on the ground, which packed the wound with needles thus stopping some of the bleeding. I was going to start a fire but I couldn't get the matches to work — which was a good thing as I was still soaked in fuel. I lay there and looked at my watch which had stopped at noon when I hit the ground. I kept firing a three-shot distress signal from my rifle every so often.

"At 3 pm, a figure came towards me and I recognized my gunner, S/Sgt. Ray Singleton, who had landed in a tree a half mile away. He had third degree burns on his hands and face and I put the socks from my survival kit on his hands."

Singleton, in the extreme rear of the bomber, saw the trail of the Sidewinder and felt the tremendous lurch from the impact. Seeing the left wing, engine pods, and other components go past his compartment, the gunner knew he had to get out. He did not have an ejection seat so to escape from the stricken Stratofort, he grabbed and pulled on the handle that blew off the entire turret and its guns. From that point, it was up to him to exit the aircraft but he was looking out into a sea of flame from the exploding fuel tanks. Trying to shield himself from the flames, Singleton pushed out of his position and into the fire. He had no other choice.

Falling and twisting, the blazing B-52B impacted Mount Taylor, an 11,305-foot

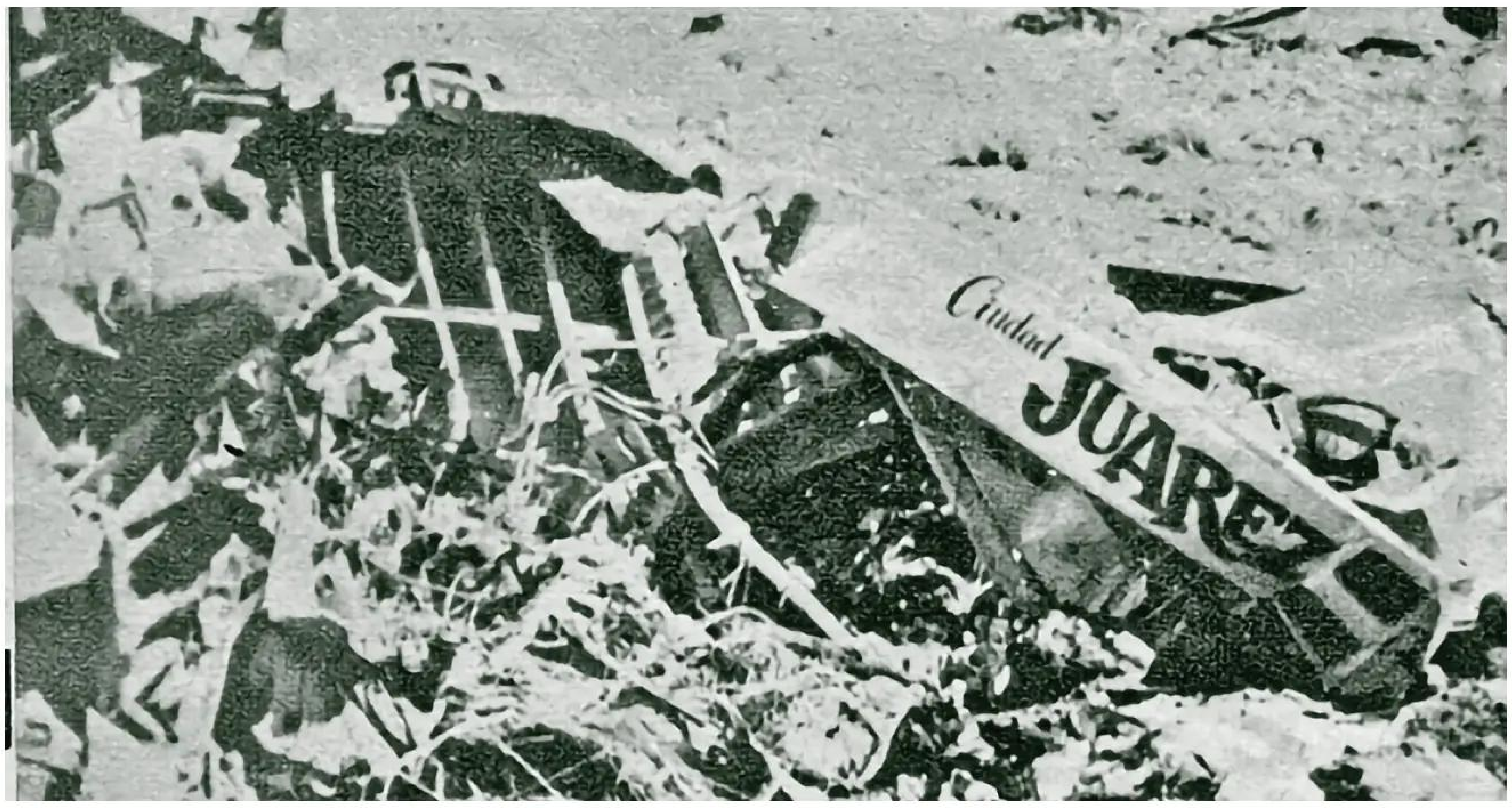
SEAT-TAIL GUNNER
AJUSTABLE HINGED BACK
TYPE
STOCK NO.
SERIAL NO.
WEBER AIRCRAFT CORP
BURBANK, CALIF.
PART NO.
ORDER NO. AF 31267
INSPECTED
WT.
U.S.

Data plate for the tail gunner's Weber seat.

U.S. AIR FORCE
RESCUE
81845

As soon as word was received of the shoot-down, a variety of aircraft and helicopters including the very effective Kaman HH-43 rescue helicopter were launched in a massive search.

mountain northeast of Grants, New Mexico. The bomber blew a 75-foot-deep crater on the mountainside. In the wreckage were Capt. Peter J. Gineris, navigator; Capt. Stephen C. Carter, bombardier; and 1st Lt. Glenn V. Blair, EWO. It was determined that shrapnel from the Sidewinder's ten-pound blast fragmentation warhead had sliced through their helmets and penetrated their brains, killing them instantly.



Remains of *Ciudad Juarez*. The impacting B-52B blew a 75-foot-deep crate in the side of the mountain.

After he got the socks on Singleton's burned hands, Blodgett and his gunner painfully moved a bit from their 7500-foot altitude on Mount Taylor. Quickly tiring from their multiple injuries, they spread their parachutes on the ground as a sighting aid for rescuers. "At 5:30 pm," recalled the Blodgett, "the cloud cover opened up and at that moment, a Lockheed T-33A flew directly overhead and spotted us. I guess you could call it a miracle. In about 30 minutes a Kaman HH-43 hovered into sight and rescued us." A few minutes after being picked up, the HH-43 spotted another parachute. It was Capt. George D. Jackso, who had broken his back. He was quickly picked up and the three were flown to the base hospital. At that time, they were the only crew members presumed to have survived.

However, the intensive search went on. Captain Ray Obel, whose ejection caused the catastrophic decompression, found himself at about 30,000 feet and in the middle of a jetstream that was traveling at 150 knots. Using his emergency escape oxygen bottle to survive, he was carried a considerable distance before landing. He was found two days later with a broken back. Manuel Mieras, who had been sucked out of the copilot's hatch and was badly injured, found himself on the ground with no memory as to what had happened. With his legs mangled and one broken, he made a crutch from branches and began very slowly to move down the mountain. Fortunately, he came across a shepherd's hut and the shepherd took him in, kept him warm, and tried the best he could to stop the pain. For 36 hours, the pair played cards and talked until the heard the sound of a rescue Kaman coming in to land. Unfortunately, the severe injuries caused one of Mieras' legs to be amputated.

This was a major disaster for the USAF, SAC, and the ANG. A "friendly" fighter had blown America's newest nuclear-capable bomber out of the air in an accident that supposedly could not have happened. Even before the last survivor was found, several investigations had been started.

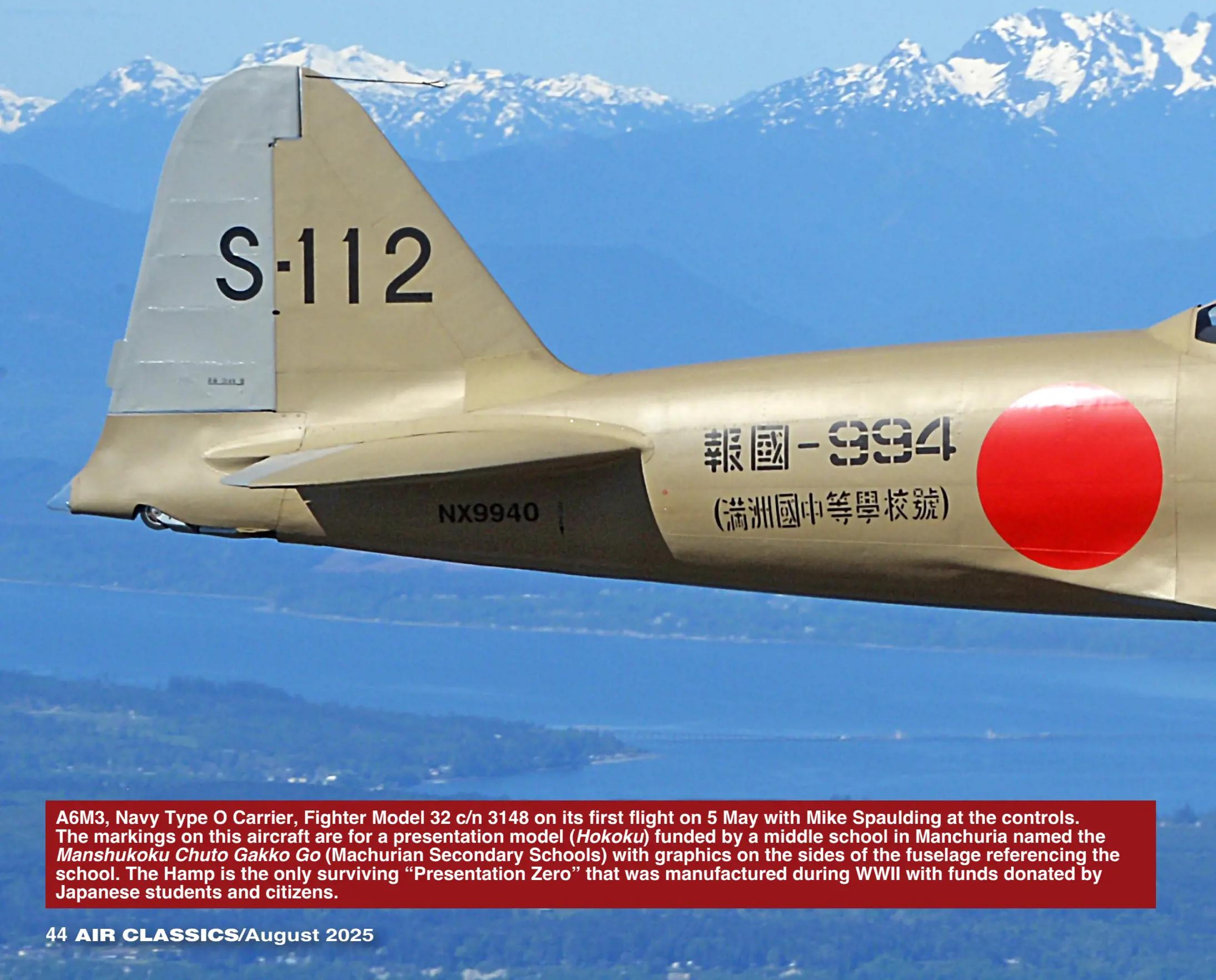
When it was all said and done, the cause of the shoot-down could have come straight out of the movie *Fail Safe*. The cause centered in a cracked plug in the No. 1 Sidewinder's firing circuit mechanism. A small amount of moisture had entered into the crack and although the firing mechanism had malfunctioned, somehow the firing impulse was sent to the No. 2 Sidewinder and the missile fired. All the NM ANG F-100As were examined and it was found that they were all capable of having the same defect. A fix was rushed into service. Training Sidewinder rounds were developed that did not have a warhead and the use of live missiles on these training flights was discontinued. Lieutenant Van Scyoc was cleared of any wrongdoing. Still, that terrifying incident in the storm-tossed skies over New Mexico would leave a deep scar on the Cold War USAF — a scar that would take a long time to heal. **AC**

HAMP AIRBORNE

WITH THE LEGEND FLYERS HAMP NOW UP AND FLYING, THERE ARE CURRENTLY SIX AIRWORTHY MITSUBISHI ZERO VARIANTS

BY MICHAEL O'LEARY

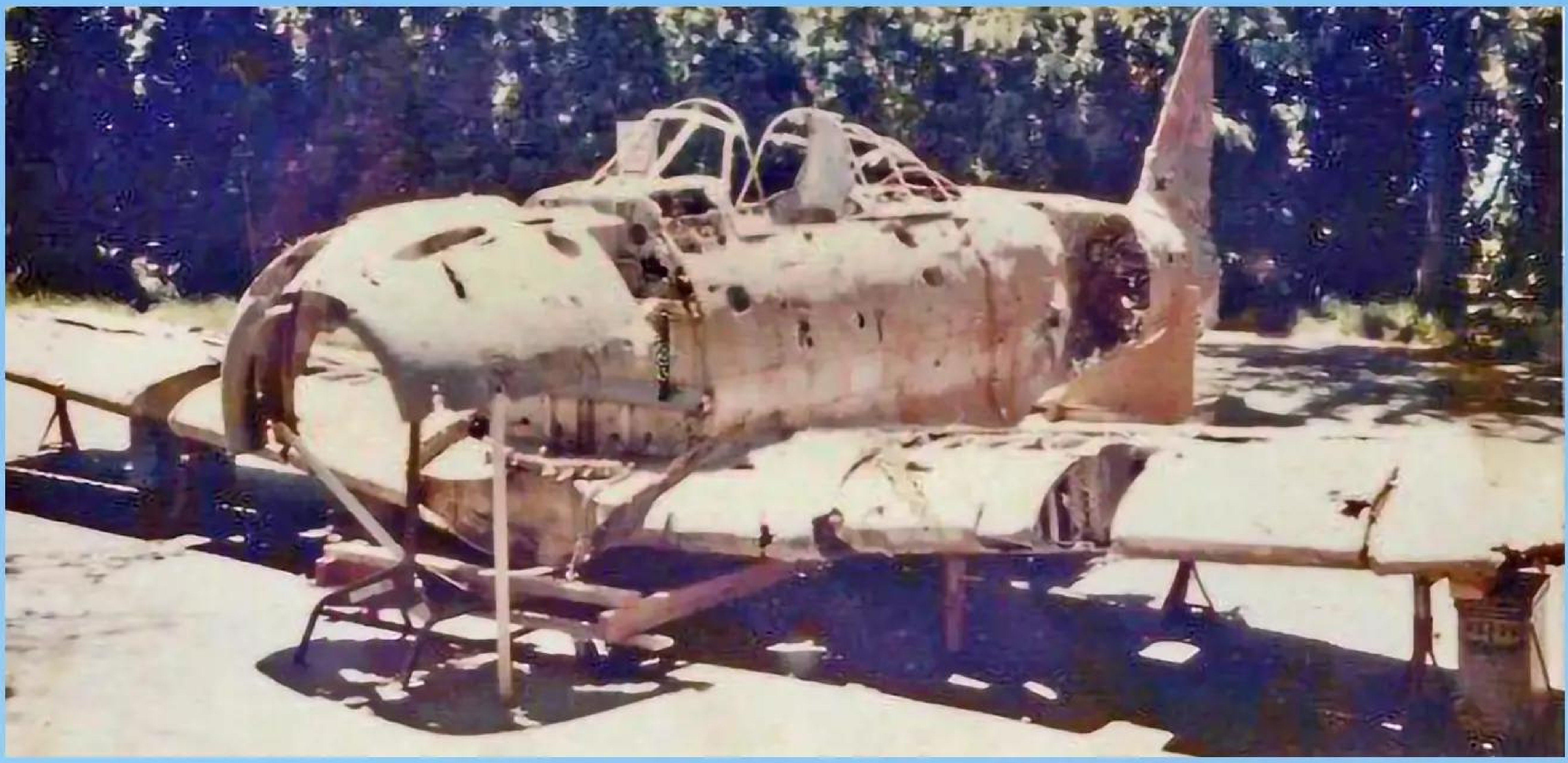
EXCLUSIVE HAMP PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM LARSEN

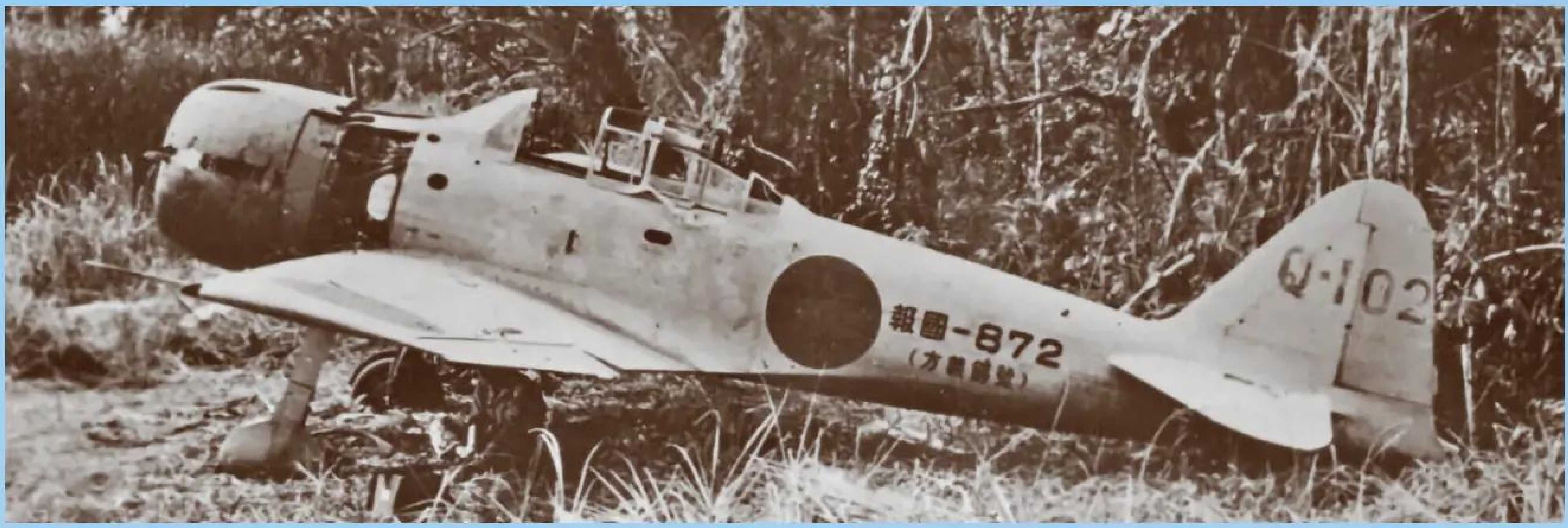


A6M3, Navy Type O Carrier, Fighter Model 32 c/n 3148 on its first flight on 5 May with Mike Spaulding at the controls. The markings on this aircraft are for a presentation model (*Hokoku*) funded by a middle school in Manchuria named the *Manshukoku Chuto Gakko Go* (Machurian Secondary Schools) with graphics on the sides of the fuselage referencing the school. The Hamp is the only surviving "Presentation Zero" that was manufactured during WWII with funds donated by Japanese students and citizens.

What exactly is a Hamp? For one, it is the Mitsubishi A6M3 Model 32 and it came about because of the great success achieved with the A6M2 Zero-Sen. Very similar in design, the Model 32 would be fitted with a new and more powerful variant of the Nakajima Sakae 12 radial that powered the A6M2. Instead of a single-speed supercharger, the new Sakae 21 would have a two-speed unit, a takeoff horsepower rating of 1130-hp, military rating of 1100-hp at 9350-ft, and 980-hp at 19,685-ft. Power would be transferred via a three-blade constant speed propeller with a larger diameter of 10-ft .35-in.

A new cowl would incorporate the supercharger intake in its upper lip while the fuselage fuel tank would need to be reduced from 21.6 Imperial gallons to 13.2 Imperial gallons. However, ammunition for the 20mm


John Sterling's photo of the recovered Hamp after it had been returned to the USA.



Wrecked and abandoned Hamps littered Japanese airfields. This example was photographed at Buna

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Steve Cox © ASAA

PREVIOUS SPREAD: Detail from the magnificent painting done by Steve Cox showing Hamp 3148 taking off from IJN *Taiyo*, which was the lead ship in her class of three escort carriers. Originally built as a passenger/cargo liner during the late 1930s, she was converted to an escort carrier in 1941. She was twice torpedoed by American submarines with negligible to moderate damage. On 18 August 1944, she was hit by a torpedo fired by USS *Rasher*. Her aft aviation fuel tank exploded and she sank in 28 minutes off of Cape Bolinao, Luzon, and approximately 400 of her crew was lost. Custom signed prints may be obtained through the information on the ad elsewhere in this issue.

Two views of the partially restored wing arriving at Legend Flyers during August 2011. The wing was built as a single-piece unit, making transportation a bit awkward.

The project in respective jigs safely inside the Legend Flyers hangar.

wing cannons would go from 60 to 100 rounds per gun.

The first A6M3 was completed in June 1941 and flight testing revealed that although performance had increased with the use of the Sakae 21, it was not by as much as was hoped. It was recommended that the folding wingtips, the mechanism for them, and the aileron trim balance be removed. This was undertaken in order to speed production and hopefully increase performance. When completed, top speed went up by 2-mph with no decrease in maneuverability. The fighter was put into production as the Navy Type 0 Carrier Fighter Model 32 (A6M3). The Americans thought the aircraft to be a new type and assigned it the code name of Hap. General Henry "Hap" Arnold did not find this amusing and the code name was rapidly changed to Hamp. When it was discovered that the plane was a modification of an existing design, the designation was changed again, this time to Zeke 52 but that seems to have been rarely used.

The decreased range became a real problem for the design. The Japanese figured that Guadalcanal and the vital airfield would be in their hands and serve as a stepping stone for the invasion of Australia. They did not count on the determined American opposition nor the fact that the Americans could begin to build aircraft strength once the SeaBees completed Henderson Field after its capture and had the strip ready to receive aircraft in just two weeks. More Wildcats and Dauntlesses arrived and a deadly war waged over a period of six months finally saw Guadalcanal firmly in American control. The Imperial Japanese Navy had an efficient force of A6M3s at Rabaul but it was 560 nautical miles from Henderson Field where the enemy would meet strong opposition. Losses rapidly mounted as the returning aircraft often simply ran out of fuel and crashed into the sea.

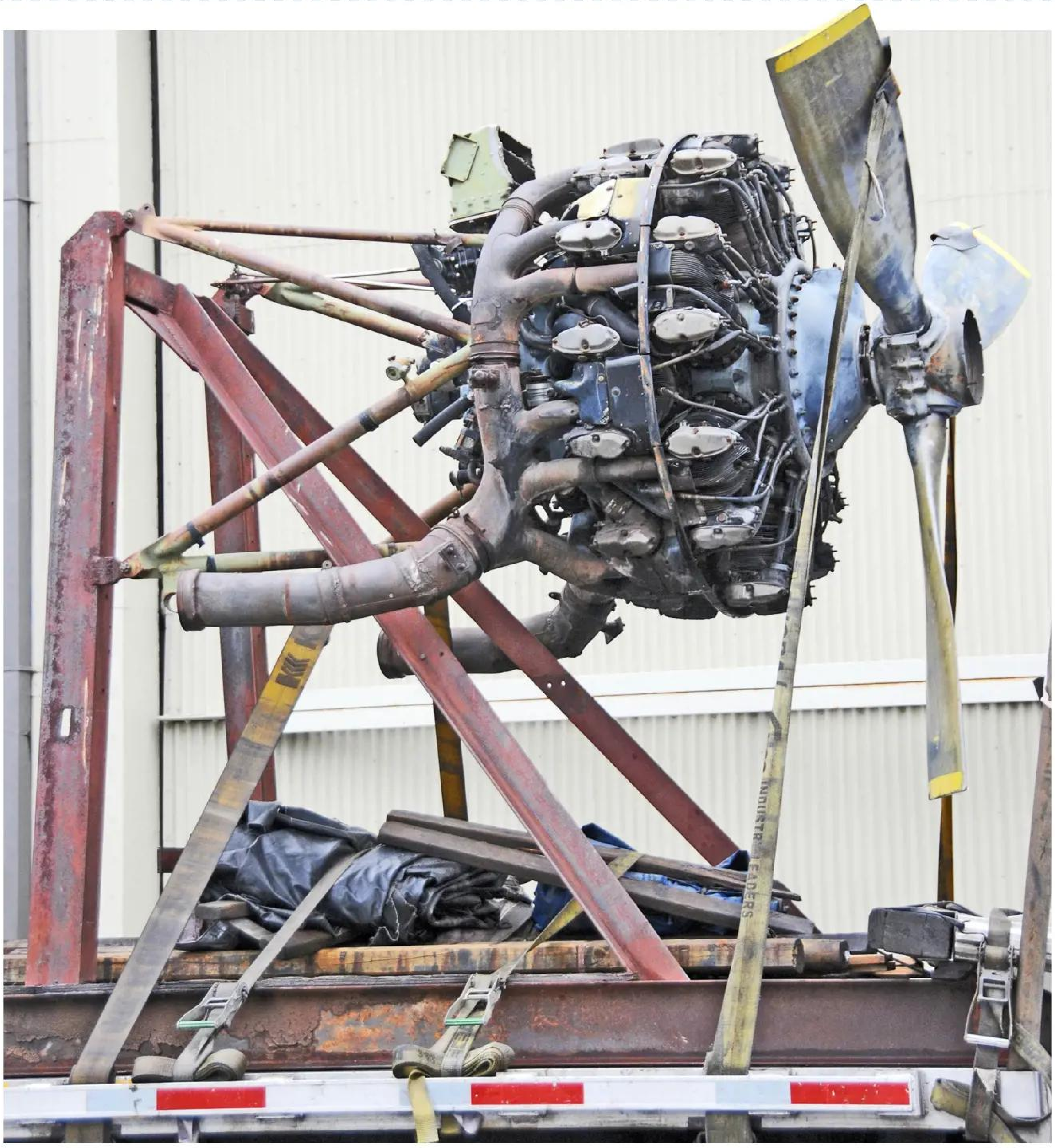
New American combat aircraft were added to the Pacific War as soon as they were available and they included the Corsair, Hellcat, Lightning, Thunderbolt, and Mustang. From being feared predators, the Zeros were now eagerly hunted prey. The combat record for the Hamp is not part of this article but Hamps flown by experienced pilots could be a handful. However, Japan's disastrous defeat at Midway meant that many skilled veteran pilots were now dead. Also, Japan had a difficult time trying to raise production figures. Then, getting those aircraft to combat units was also difficult. It was a war of attrition and by the invasion of Okinawa much of the surviving Hamp force was being used for *kamikaze* attacks.

By the late 1980s, there were still numerous hulks of Japanese aircraft scattered through the islands of the South Pacific — moldering relics of a war now starting to slip from our collective memory. The aircraft that forms the basis for this article apparently started out as two different airframes — A6M3 Model 32 c/n 3148 and c/n 3145. These two aircraft were completed at the Mitsubishi No. 3 Airframe Works factory which was located at Nagoya. It appears the airframes were finished during September 1942 and this was long before American bombing would devastate the area. Even at this relatively early stage of the Pacific War, transporting Japanese aircraft by ship was becoming hazardous because US Navy submarines were taking an increasing toll of cargo ships. However, these two fighters, in company with others, completed the hazardous ocean journey to eventually be based in the Marshall Islands.

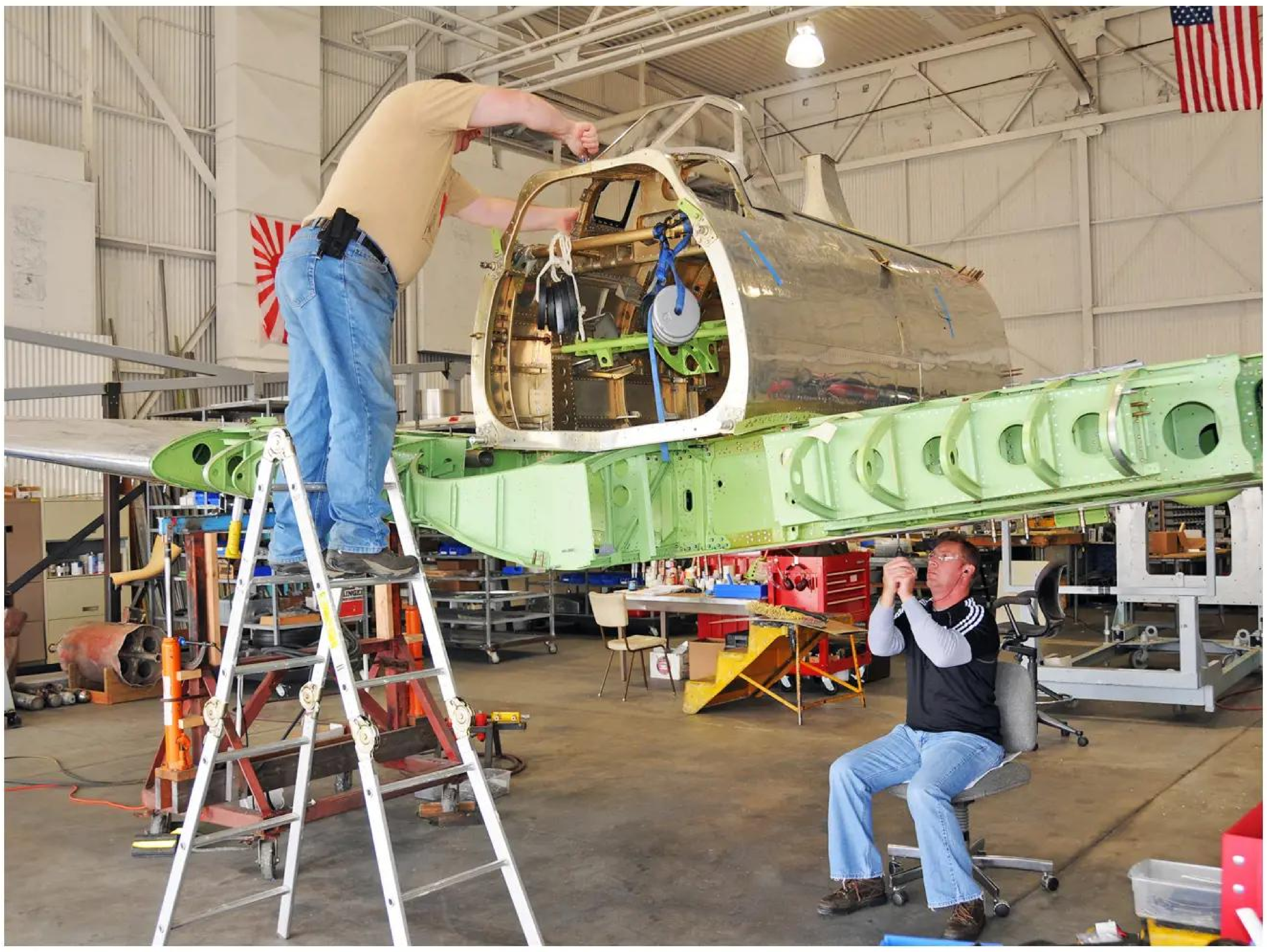
Although Taroa Island in the Marshalls is rather small in size (just about a square mile), it formed an important aerial base for the Japanese. Along with a seaplane base, a radar unit, around 400 military structures, and a coastal artillery unit, Taroa had two runways — one being 4800 feet in length, the other 4100 feet. A third runway was under construction when American forces attacked the island, which was staffed by just over 3000 military personnel but this number also included Korean and native slave laborers.

As American influence in the area grew, it was obvious that Taroa would become a focal point for aerial attacks. Among the first American bombers to "visit" the island were the Liberators of the 30th Bomb Group and the B-24s began attacking the island during the fall of 1943. Operation *Flintlock*, the American invasion of the Gilbert and Marshall Islands began in January 1944.

Taroa would be basically leveled in the process. However, the smaller islands would not be invaded and American forces would instead go ashore at Kwajalein Atoll. Now cutoff from the outside world, the Japanese on Taroa would rarely receive supplies



This original Sakae 21 radial came with the project but it was acquired by the American Heritage Museum after the decision had been made to go with the R-1830 for power.



Legend Flyers craftsmen affixing the fuselage center section to the wing. This view shows the substantial nature of the spar.

CENTER SPREAD: Mike Spaulding banking the Hamp over Puget Sound. Hamp 3148 was assigned to the Japanese Air Group 252 *Kykutai*, 22nd Air Flotilla. The main force of Air Group 252 was originally stationed on board the aircraft carrier IJN *Taiyo* and participated in the defense of Guadalcanal between November 1942 and February 1943. Air Group 252 also fought from bases at Rabaul, Ballale, Lae, and Munda and participated in battles at Tarawa, Wake, Solomon Islands, and the Marshall Islands. Hamp 3148 was assigned to the Japanese air base on the island of Taroa, located in the Maloelop Atoll in the Marshall Islands during March 1943.

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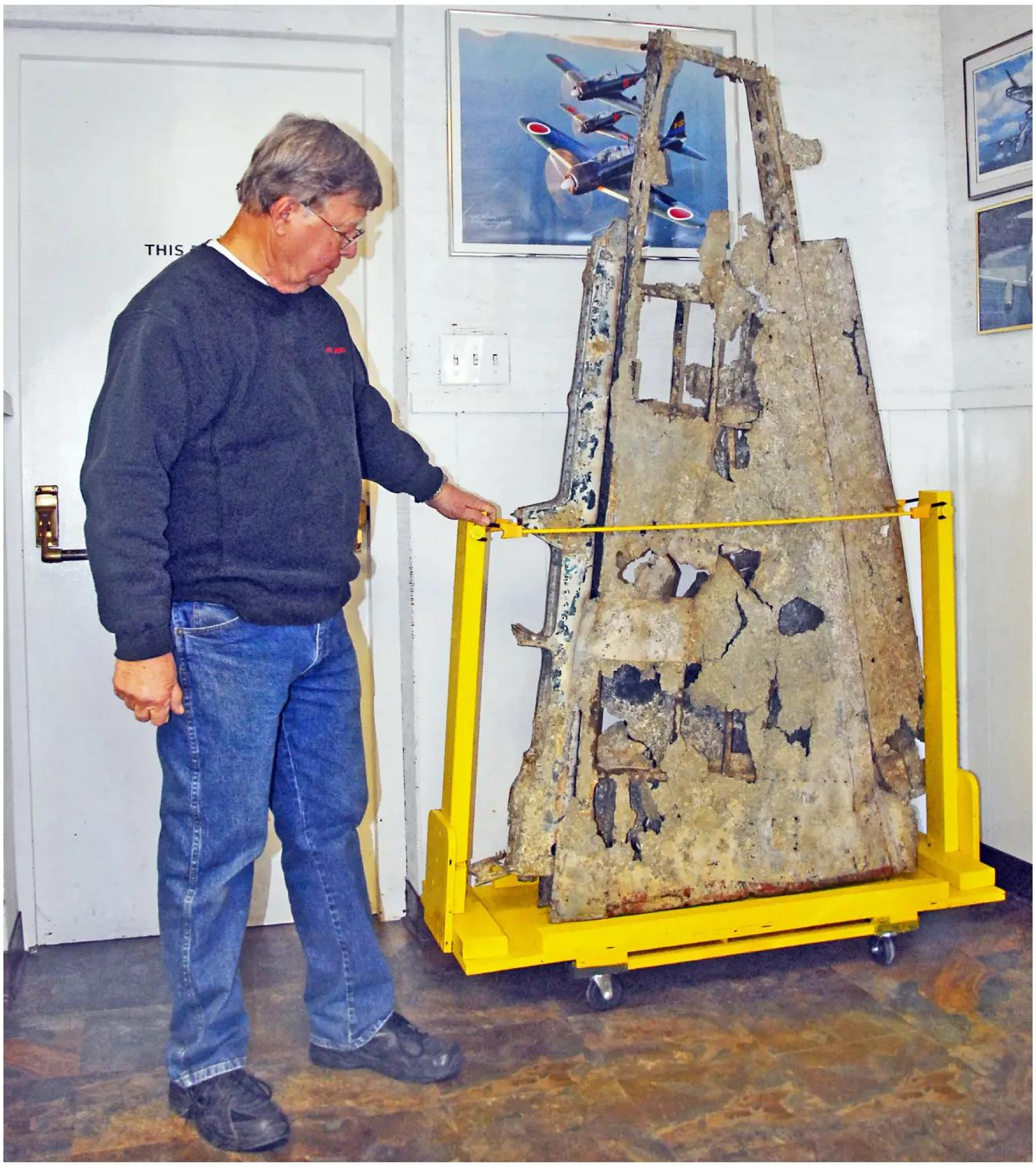


Bob Hammer with an original Hamp horizontal stabilizer illustrating the condition in which the component was recovered.

but they would be blasted constantly by USAAF and USN units until nearly the last day of the war. The Japanese pilots were ordered off the island and they were flown out in two Betty bombers on the night of 5 February 1944, leaving all their equipment behind including our subject aircraft. Starvation, disease, and the constant strafing/bombing began to decrease the Japanese on the island.

With the end of the war, the survivors were repatriated to Japan and the island was basically forgotten. As noted, the late 1980s saw an interest in recovering Japanese airframes. In 1993, I met John Sterling who was visiting the Museum of Flying to learn about the aircraft restorations being undertaken by Flight Magic. John and brother Tom had visited Taroa and stayed on the island for three months. During this time, the hauled out the basic material for two Zeros. One of these (c/n 3489) would later be sold to the Imperial War Museum where it was displayed in “as found” condition.

The second aircraft consisted of a sawed-off rear fuselage (c/n 3145) combined with a forward fuselage and wings (c/n 3148). It was not uncommon during the war for a damaged aircraft to be mated with components from another airframe to result in a flying fighter. The material was moved back to the Sterling base at Boise, Idaho, while a plan was put together. Restoring a Zero is a complex and costly project. Even though the airframe appears relatively simple, it isn’t. Unlike American aircraft production lines, the Japanese aeronautical industry was fed components from hundreds of small “cottage industry” shops. Aircraft aluminum was in short supply so even items that should have been stamped out by the thousands were instead pieced together with little bits of metal.

Work started on the airframe but it was eventually sold to the Evergreen Air Museum in McMinnville, Oregon, and was then transferred to a rebuilder at Fort Collins, Colorado, for restoration back to flying condition with a Pratt & Whitney R-1830 for power. As the situation at Evergreen declined, the project found its way to Bob Hammer’s Legend Flyers at Paine Field in Everett, Washington. Legend Flyers is, of course, well-known for their flying Messerschmitt Me 262 Stormbird jets.

To say that Bob Hammer is a committed aviation enthusiast would be an understatement. “I grew up in Minnesota,” said Bob during a recent conversation. “I was always in love with aircraft and began flying a Piper J-3 Cub when I was 16 and got my private pilot license soon after that. I would go on to college and get a degree in mechanical engineering before going to work at Boeing. I retired from Boeing after 38 years and during that time, I worked on a number of other aircraft

SPECIFICATIONS A6M3 MODEL 32

Span	36-ft 1-in
Length	29-ft 8.75-in
Height	11-ft 6-in
Wing Area	229.27-sq-ft
Empty Weight	3984-lbs
Loaded Weight	5609-lbs
Max Speed	338-mph
Cruise Speed	200-mph
Range	1284-nm
Climb	19,685-ft in 7-min 1-sec
Ceiling	36,250-ft
Powerplant	Nakajima Nk1F Sakae/1130-hp

projects. I am a long-time member of the EAA and have always enjoyed homebuilt aircraft. I built a Thorp T-18 and two Seafires, one of which won a Lindy Trophy at Oshkosh.

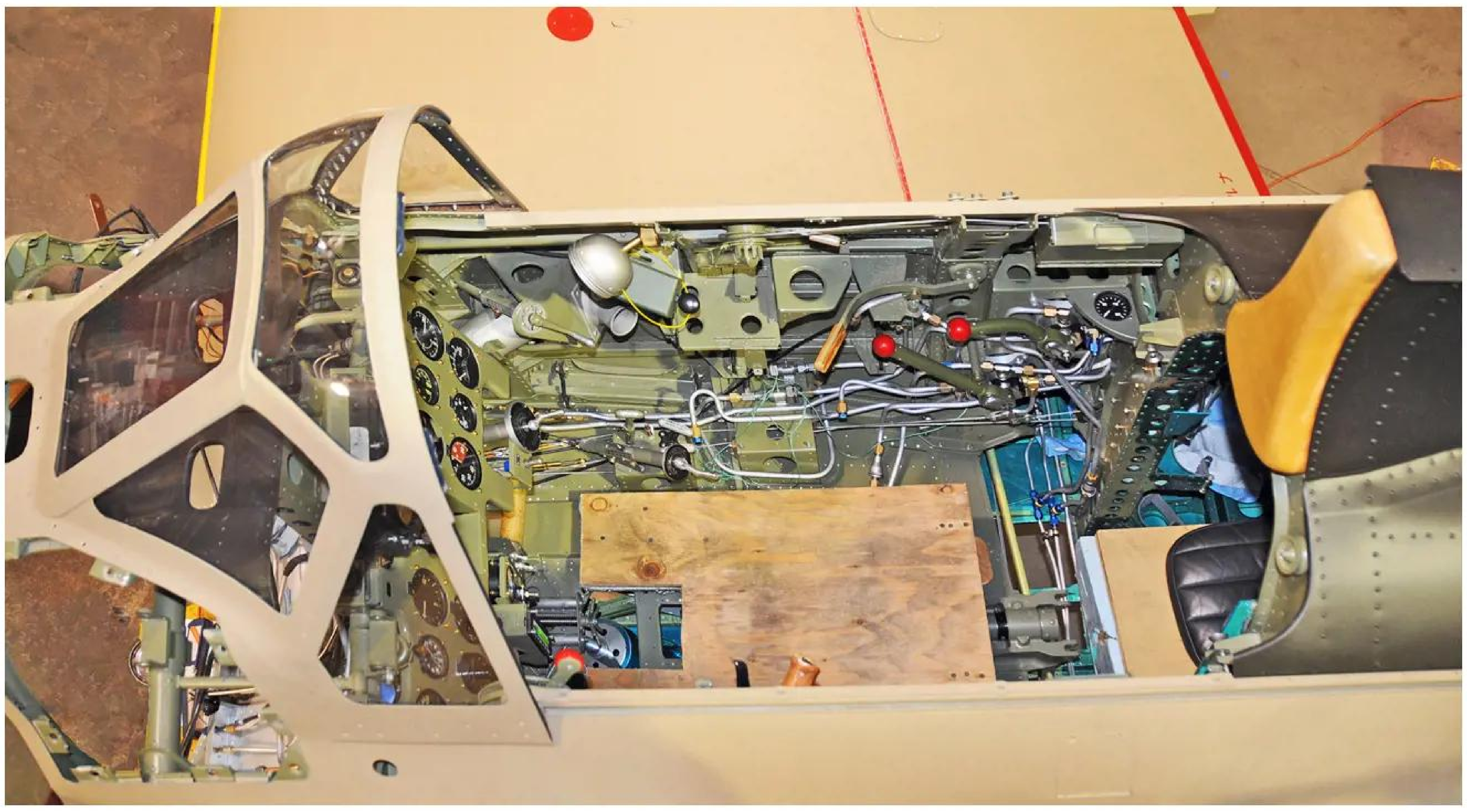
"After retiring from Boeing after 38 years, I had several meetings with Steve Snyder regarding the construction of the replica Me 262 projects. This led to the forming of the Me 262 Project at Paine Field and that eventually turned into Legend Flyers. Building the 262s was a real learning experience and involved meeting many people in the Warbird industry. One of those individuals was Jerry Yagen who was creating a world-class aviation museum in Virginia.

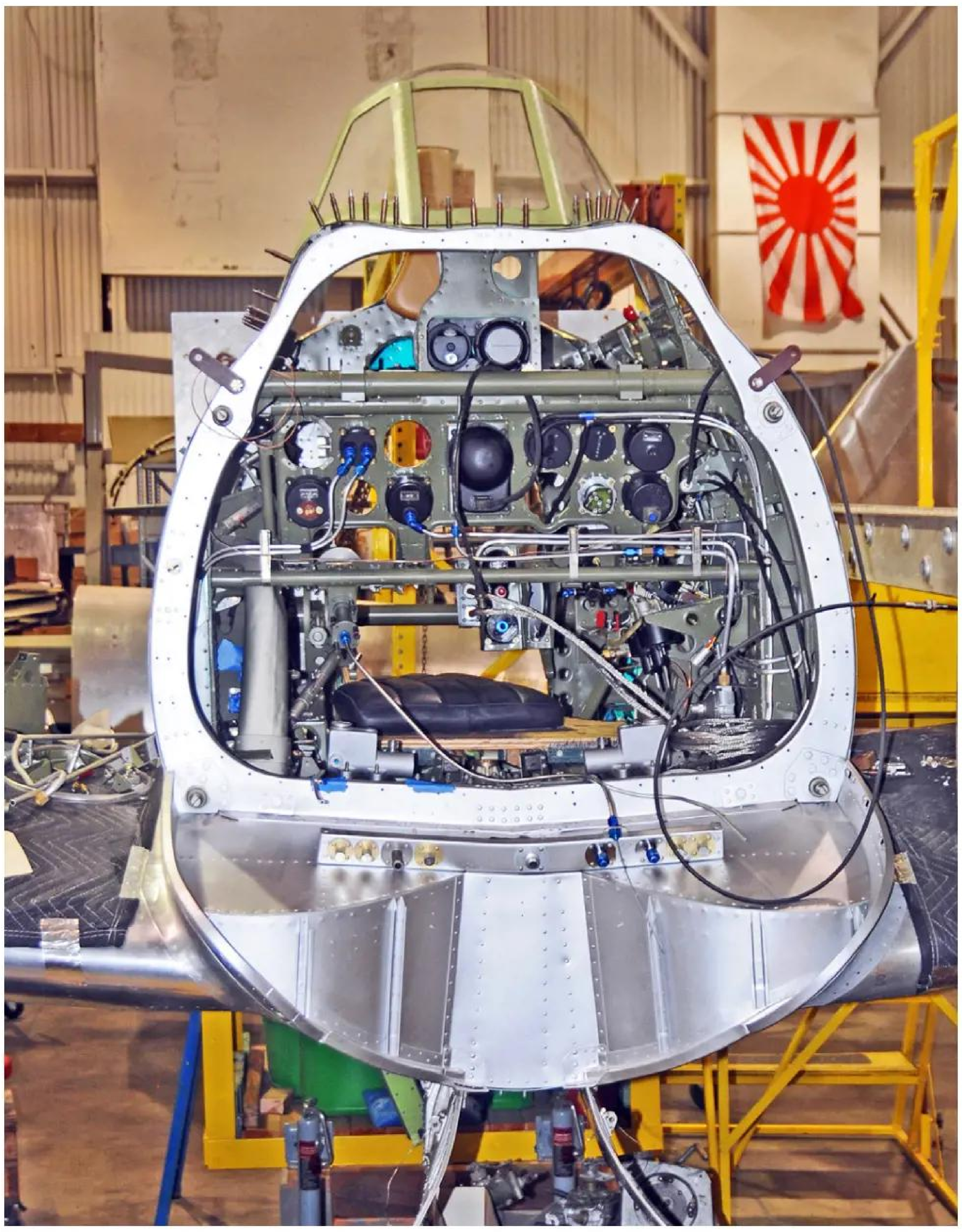
"Jerry had a deep interest in all the Allied and Axis aircraft of the Second World War and he became very interested in our Stormbirds. Jerry eventually purchased one of our 262s and by then we had developed an excellent business relationship."

As the Me 262s were delivered to customers, Bob began to look at other projects for Legend Flyers. "That is when I had a chance to acquire the Hamp," said Bob. "It took a couple truckloads to get everything to our facility and then we went through what we had and how we were going to tackle the rebuild. Right up front, I have to say that there are few WWII aircraft more complicated than the Hamp/Zero series. We had parts from at least two airframes. The Sterlings had gathered just about everything they could find and traded it all for a Ford tractor to the natives. Part way through the project, I started to wonder who got the better deal!"

Gathering blueprints, photos, and anything else related to the Hamp was a project in its own right. "Right from the start, I said safety was going to be our number one priority with the Hamp and authenticity would be number two," commented Hammer. However, when it came to authenticity, no effort was spared. All one has to do is look into the cockpit and the incredible amount of original detailing to prove this statement.

"As work progressed on the Hamp, Jerry became very interested in the aircraft and made several visits to check out our work. We struck a deal whereby Jerry and his museum would become the owner of the Hamp once all the flight testing was satisfactorily completed. This turned out to be a good arrangement since Jerry understood the scope of the project and was always there when we needed him."


Looking down into the nearly completed cockpit.


The back of the instrument panel. Instruments can only be replaced from the rear and there would be an oil tank in front of them so a simple instrument change can become a big task.

Over the years, we have presented updates on the restoration of the aircraft. It was not easy going yet constant progress was made. "Jerry began to have some physical problems," said Bob "and when that happened our lines of communication became disrupted and that slowed the program. In my opinion, the Hamp could have flown three years ago." An R-1830-92 radial was selected for power. "When you are restoring a P-51, there is a huge secondary market where just about anything related to the Mustang can either be purchased or made," said Bob. "With the Hamp that is just not true. There is no easy source for anything to do with the Hamp. It is just an amazingly labor-intensive airplane."

As the airframe neared completion, dozens of gear swings were undertaken along with engine runs and then taxi tests. On 3 May, Mike Spaulding, chief pilot of the Military Aviation Museum, arrived at Paine Field and began a final inspection of the Hamp. In the meantime, Jim Larsen began planning out the chase flight for the Hamp's first venture into the sky. "Since the Hamp remains in the ownership of Legend Flyers until the flight test program is completed, we wanted the first flight to go perfectly.

Nick Cirelli working in the cockpit area.

Crew chief Ben Johnson at work on the rear fuselage shortly after its arrival.

To make sure that happened, we were going to fly as safety chase," said Jim. "That way, Mike could concentrate on the flying while we would keep close watch to make sure everything was going correctly. Mark Darrow provided the Beech T-34C Turbine Mentor and this aircraft had excellent speed range capabilities with the Hamp. We undertook a detailed briefing and went over the flight test route with Mike — basically the same as used with the 262 program. We did not anticipate any problems but the chase flight would add an extra measure of safety.

"The Seattle area can be pretty notorious for weather," said Jim "but 5 May dawned bright and clear. Bob and Dan Hammer along with Bennett Johnson did a thorough walkaround of the Hamp to make sure everything was ready for Mike. Once he was strapped in, the R-1830-92 fired right up and we soon headed out for the active.

Ben Johnson working on cowl components with the newly installed R-1830-92 in the background.

"The plan was to keep the first flight relatively short and do around a dozen laps in the test area before heading back to Paine Field. Takeoff was flawless and Mike had the gear up and heading to the test area while Mark locked on in the T-34C and we maneuvered around the Hamp to make sure everything was working as advertised. It was an absolutely beautiful day and the Hamp just purred through the test area. After completing the initial flight test profile, Mike came on the radio and announced he was heading back for landing. We followed along to make sure gear and flaps came down followed by a perfect touchdown."

"Any first flight has a certain amount of tension," said Bob Hammer. "However, we knew we had done an excellent job with the Hamp and this was proven by the trouble-free flight. Spaulding was completely happy with the aircraft and he did one more on the 5th before heading back home. We anticipate rest of the flight test program will progress smoothly and once that is done, the Hamp will be signed off to the Military Aviation Museum and be on its way to its new home in Virginia. Then, Legend Flyers will be back at work on our next project — the flying Boeing P-26s."

With the Hamp up and flying, we decided this issue would be an ideal time to examine the other flying Zeros — all of which are in North America. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see these aircraft in the air at the same time!

ED MALONEY AND THE ZERO

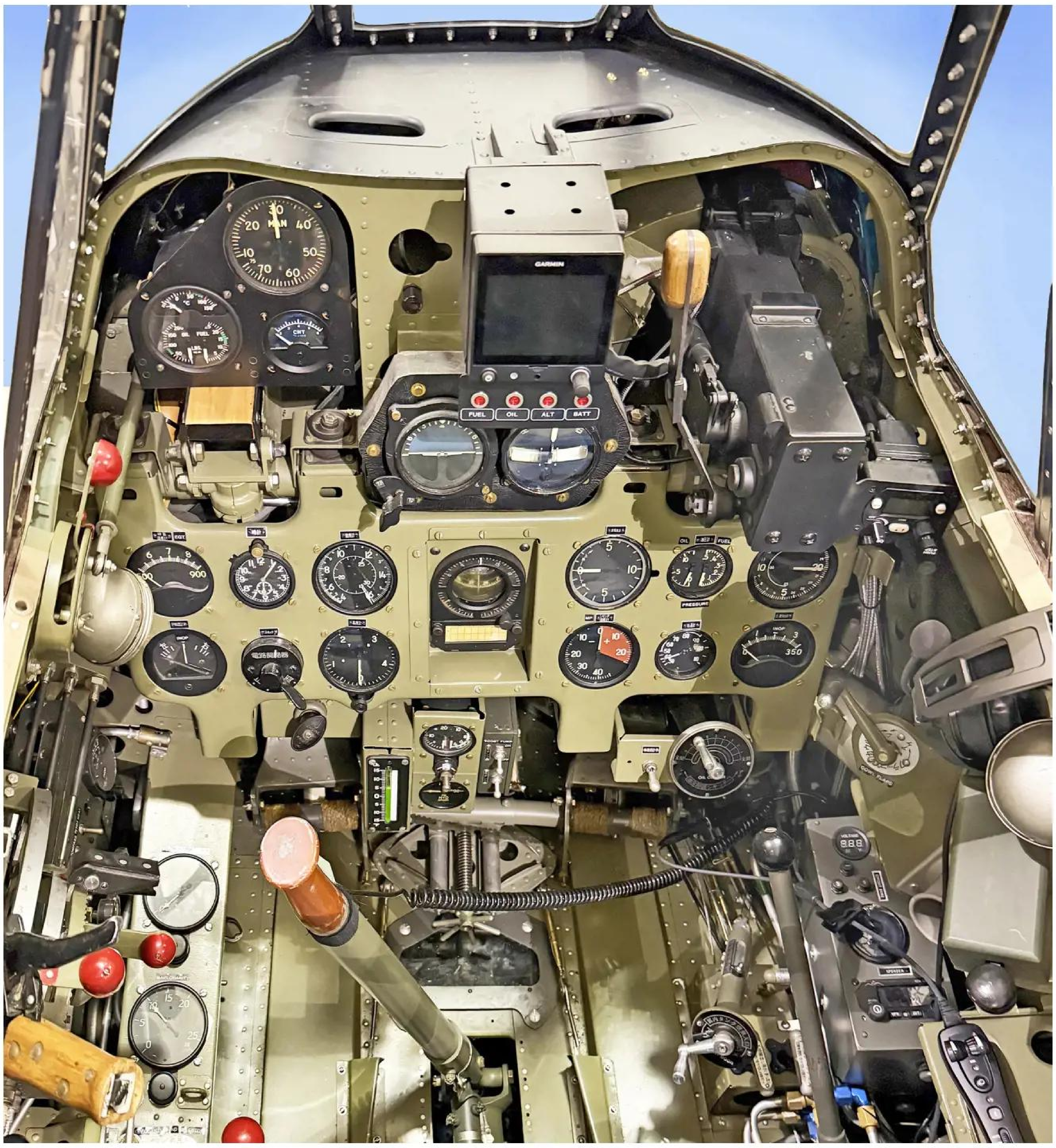
"As you know, one of my primary goals when I began to acquire historic aircraft was to find and preserve examples of captured enemy planes that had been brought to his country for testing or display." Speaking was Ed Maloney, the legendary creator of The Air Museum (TAM) that would later become Planes of Fame (POF). Every few months, Ed and I would meet for lunch and an informal interview session with the tape recorder. One of those sessions turned to enemy aircraft. "I know it is difficult for those that did not live in a particular era to visualize that time," said Ed. "You sort of have to rely on what I say about southern California in the late 1940s. There were aircraft and aircraft components almost everywhere. It seemed that every vacant lot had a surplus airplane. There were piles of wings, stacks of engines, it just went on and on. To win the war, America heavily overbuilt and after VJ-Day thousands of tons of inventory were sold at scrap prices."

Few of the captured aircraft held any long-term value. Some went to museums but when the military was done with a plane it was usually junked. "I found out that the Navy was getting rid of some planes and upon investigation discovered that this group included two Zeros. Not having much money nor a place to put my finds all factored in to how I would attempt to acquire aircraft but I knew that if I personally did not take some form of action, then these planes would come to bad ends. It just seemed that no one else cared."

Ed traveled to NAS Alameda to view some Navy aircraft for sale, including two Zeros. "I was surprised by the condition of one of the aircraft," recalled Ed. "It was really good. The other Zero was rough. At some point, the wings had been cut off but it was basically intact." A deal was struck and young Maloney now found himself with two examples of Japan's most famous WWII aircraft for his growing collection. "At the time, there just wasn't any thought to getting the planes to fly. Simply finding and moving them, then trying to get a place to store them was a big enough challenge. Also, it would take some time to discover their history."

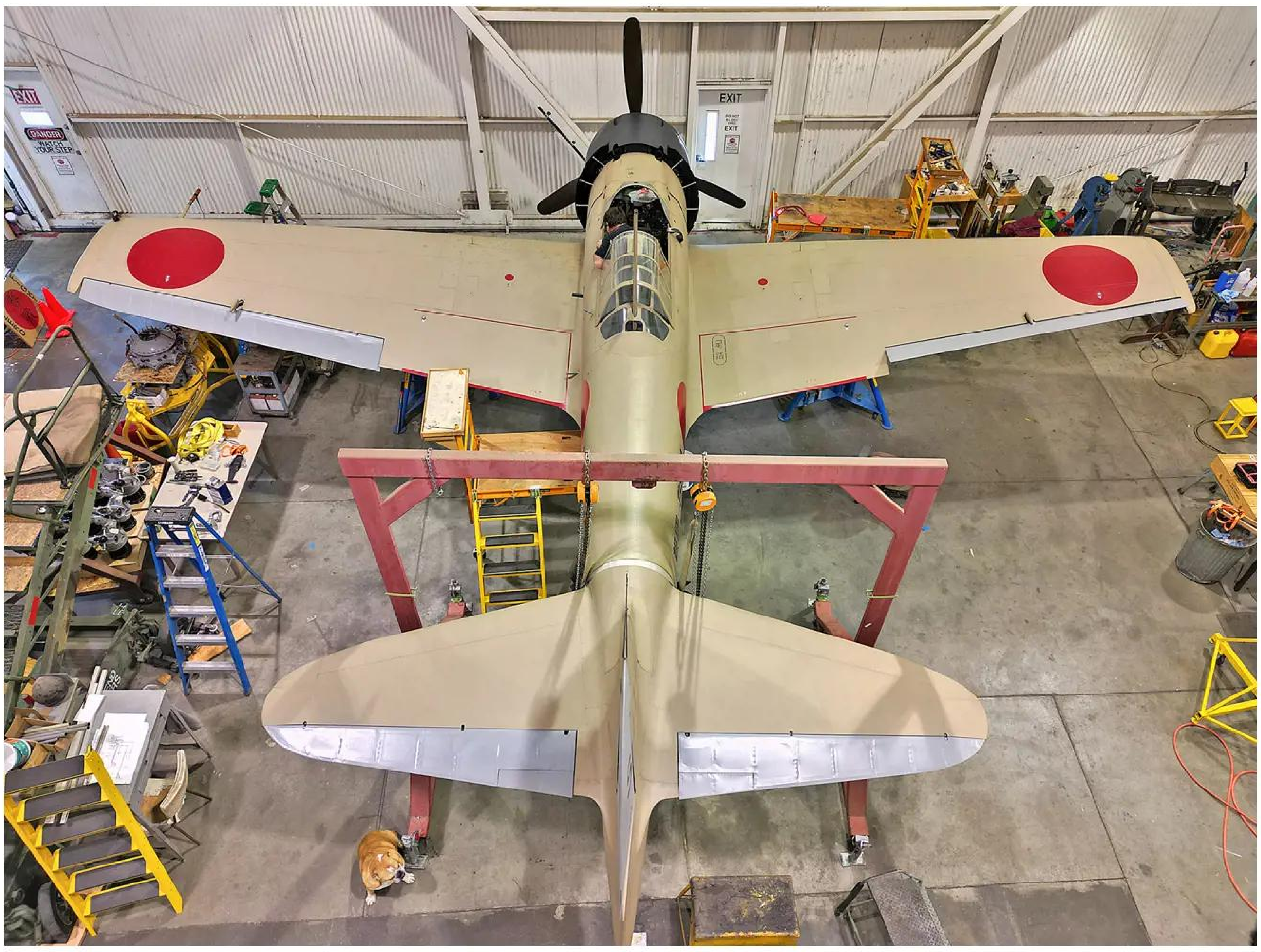
The Zero in good condition was an A6M5 Model 52 built under license by Nakajima as c/n 5357. Completed in May 1943, it would go to the Imperial Japanese Navy's 261st *Kokutai* (Air Group) where it carried the tail code 61-120. Initially assigned to defending the Home Islands, the Zero would be transported to Iwo Jima (October 1943/March 1944), and then to Saipan where it was stationed at Aslito Airfield.

The 27th Infantry Division took control of Aslito on 18 June 1944 and in the debris of war they found

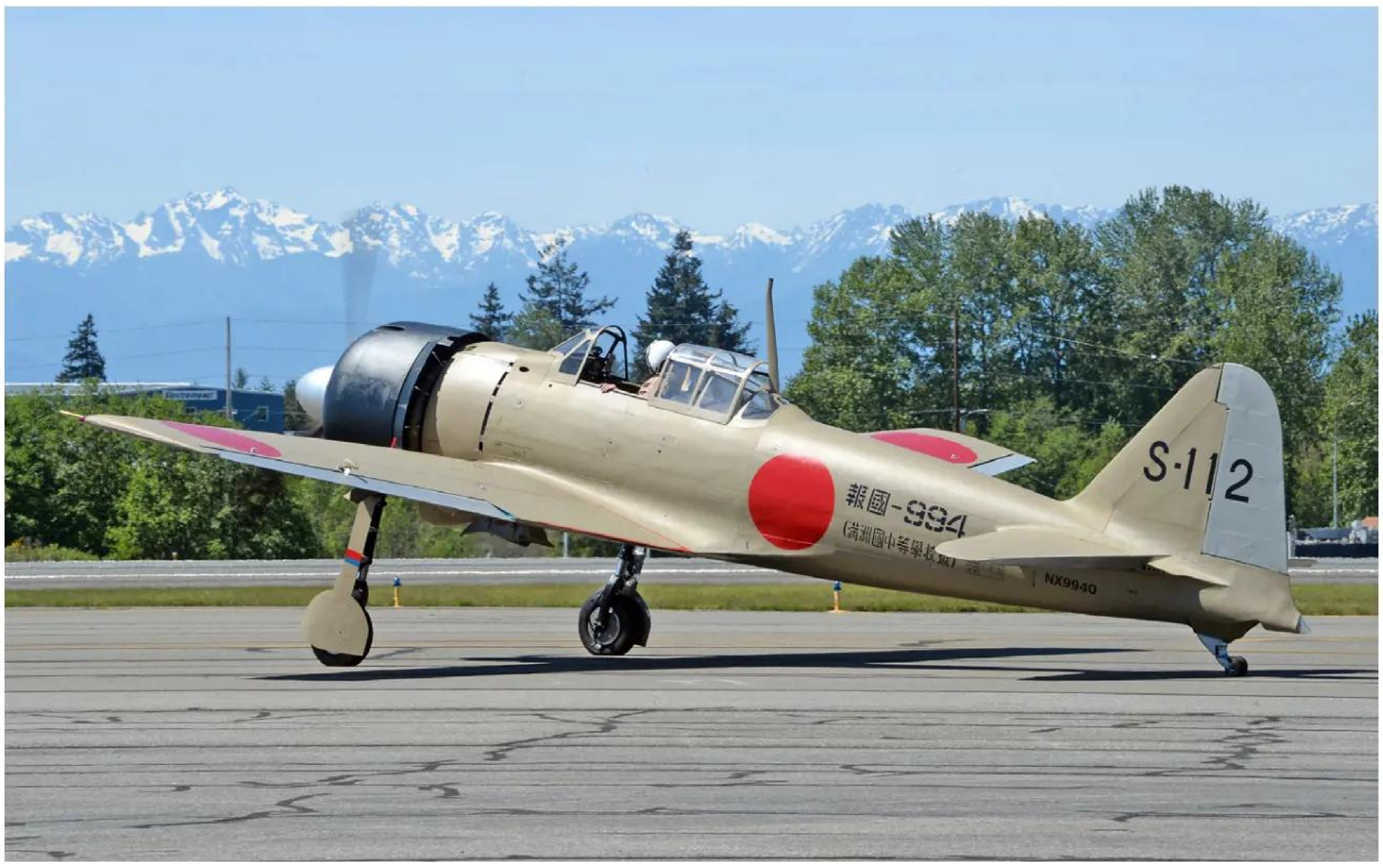

Completed Hamp cockpit with extra flight test instrumentation that will be removed once test work is complete.

Mark Darrow flew the T-34C safety chase aircraft.

The Hamp when it was first capable of being rolled out on its own tires during December 2013.



High-angle view with all the markings in place. As per factory specs, the controls surfaces are a different color than the rest of the aircraft.



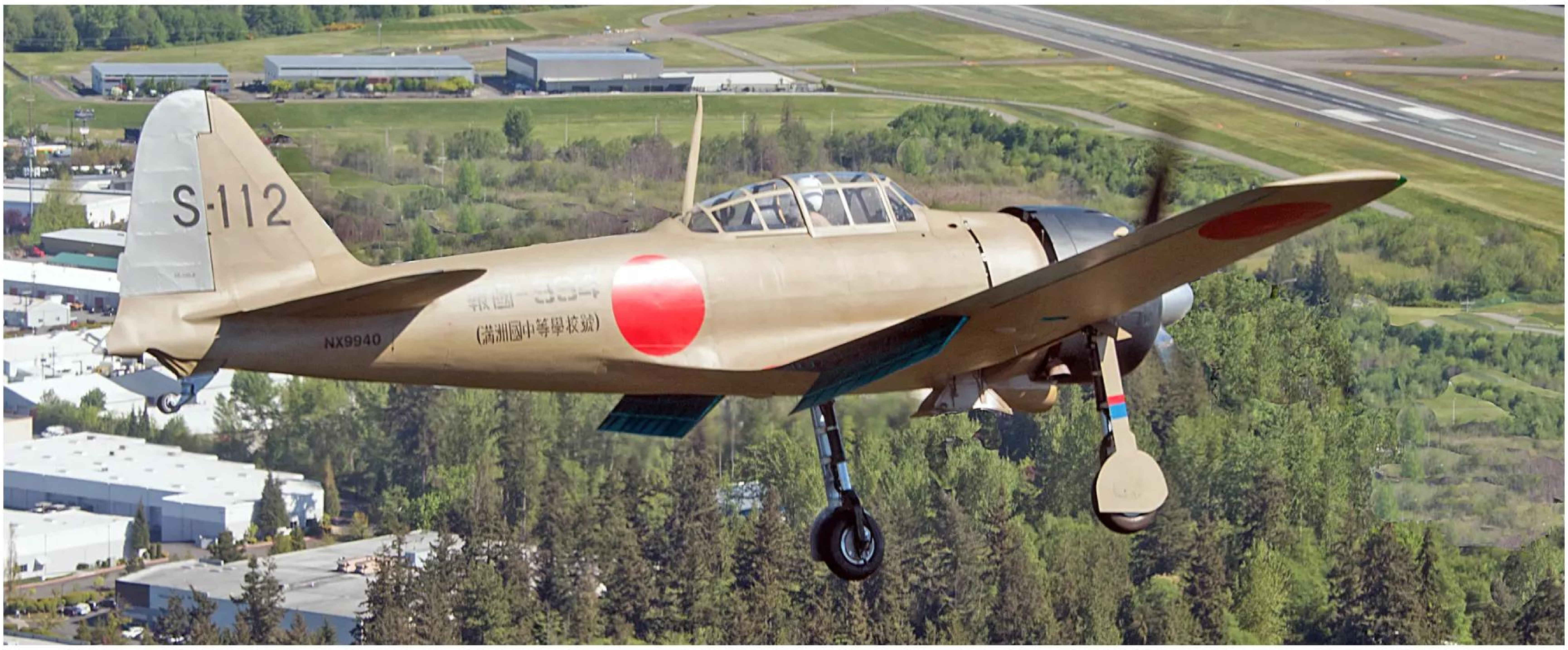
Power coming up, Mike Spaulding prepares for the first takeoff on 5 May.

a Nakajima Kate torpedo-bomber and eleven Zeros. These aircraft were essentially complete and in basically good condition. A decision was made that the planes would be shipped back to the USA for further study and testing. They were loaded aboard the USS *Copahee* (CVE-12) along with spare engines and extra components and then set sail for the sprawling Navy base at San Diego, arriving on 28 July 1944.

At the North Island facility, 61-120 was IRANed by the Navy and made ready for flight. "There was an urgency," said Ed "and the Navy got things done really quickly and this included a new paint scheme. A first test flight took place on 5 August followed by a few more and then on the 22nd of that month, a Navy pilot flew the plane to NAS Anacostia and this was followed by a flight to NAS Patuxent River. That field was the home of the Technical Air Intelligence Center (TAIC) and the Zero was given the new code of TAIC 5."

As TAIC 5, the aircraft was flown by numerous test pilots and it also flew competitive trials against all the current USN/USAAF aircraft at the military's fighter conference that took place between 16/23 October. One of the pilots that flew the Zero was Charles Lindbergh, who was serving as a test pilot for United Aircraft Corporation. "It came as a shock to open the log book and see Lindbergh's signature," said Ed.

Eventually, there just was not any



First flight successfully completed, Spaulding and the Hamp return to Paine Field.

further need for the "old" fighter and it was flown to NAS Alameda and parked among hundreds of other stored Navy aircraft. "When I went through the original logs, I saw that most of the flights were relatively short and recorded flight time when the Zero was parked at Alameda was just 179 hours," said Steve Hinton. When we interviewed Steve on 17 May, total flight time in the logs was just 550 hours. "It's a rare aircraft and we are careful how much we fly it.

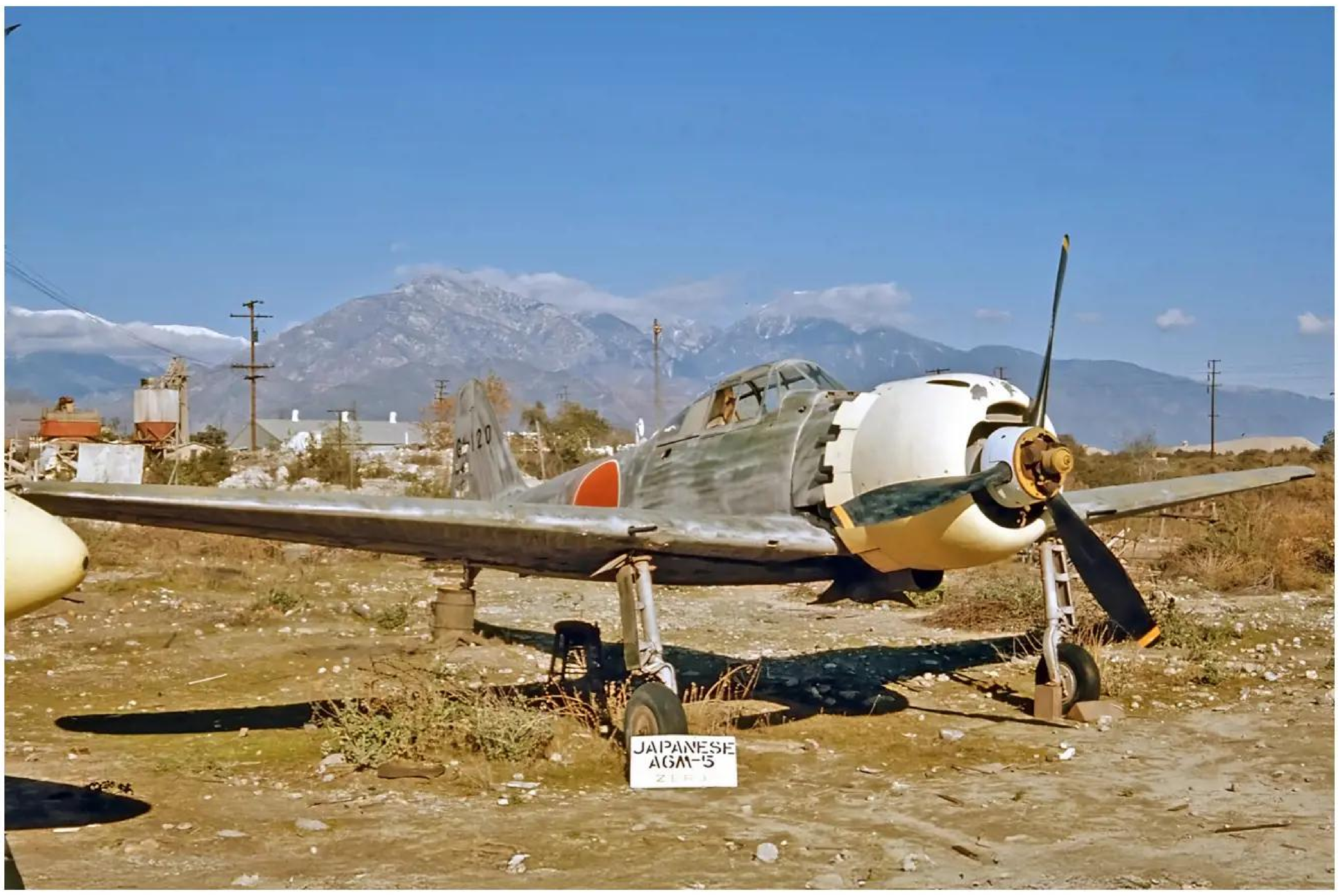
"When Ed got the first location for The Air Museum at Claremont, California, off of Route 66, both Zeros were displayed outside because interior room was very limited," recalled Steve. "From that point, the aircraft moved with the museum — first to Ontario Airport, then to Buena Park, then to Chino, and now we are getting ready to move to our new home at Santa Maria."

During the early formative years, the museum struggled while Ed tried to keep the collection intact and the museum open. One of the other captured aircraft Ed had obtained was a Nakajima Ki 84 *Hayate*. "It was in really exceptional shape," recalled Ed. "We had friends at North American that returned it to flying shape and we struck a deal to have the aircraft on display and flying at the 1973 Japan International Aerospace Show where Don Lykins did the flying."

While at this event, Ed and Don were introduced to the president of Mitsubishi. "He asked what it would take to get the plane back in the air," recalled Ed. "That really lit a spark and when we got home, we began to go through the fighter and see what it would take."

"By this time, I was old enough to work on the Zero along with Jim Maloney and we put in hundreds of hours on the aircraft. We had two engines and they were sent to Steward Davis at Long Beach and they took the best components from the two and made a great engine that is still running strong some 47 years later. Since the plane was in pretty good condition, the restoration moved ahead

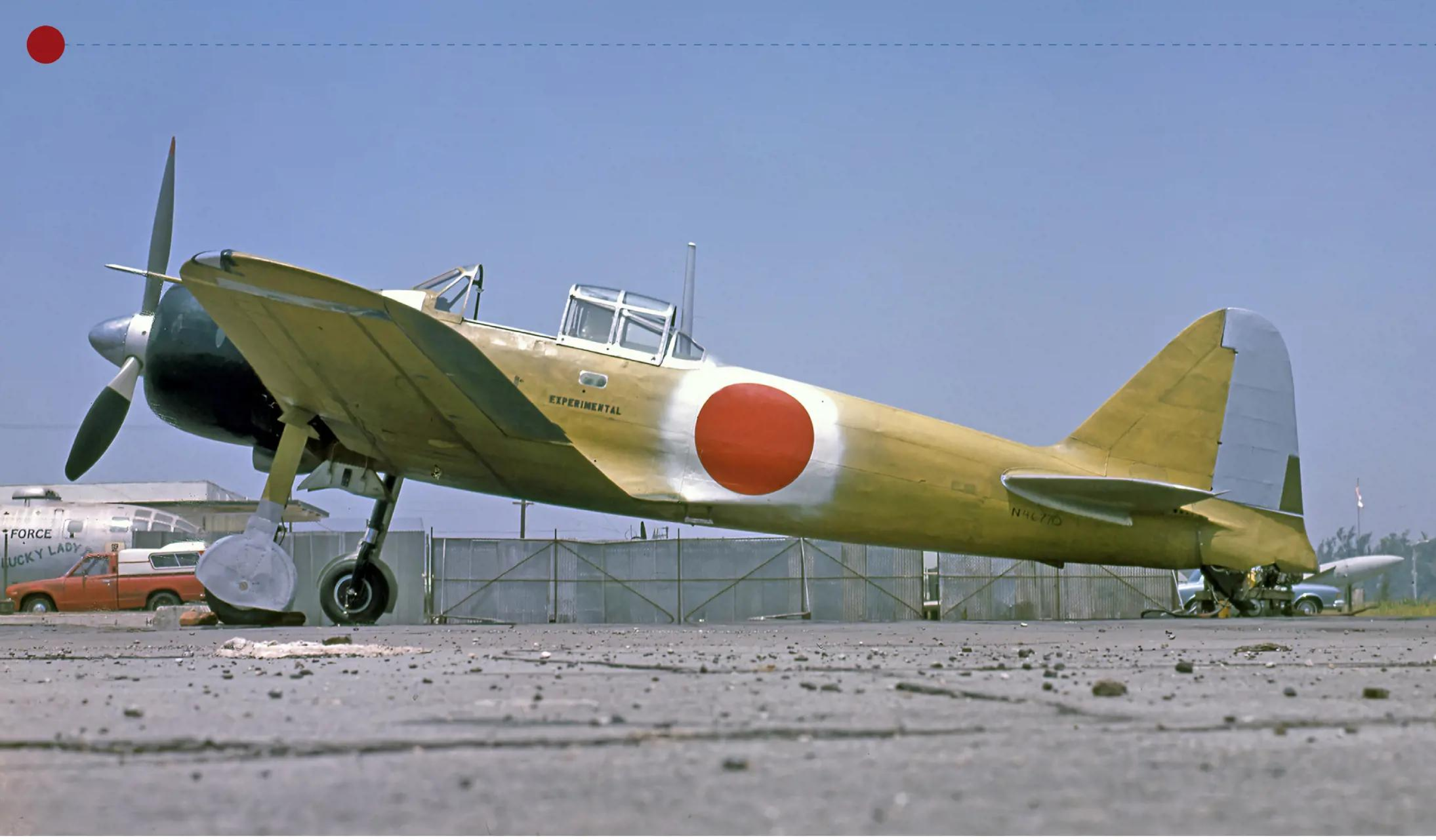
Bob Hammer and Mike Spaulding after the successful conclusion of the first flight.



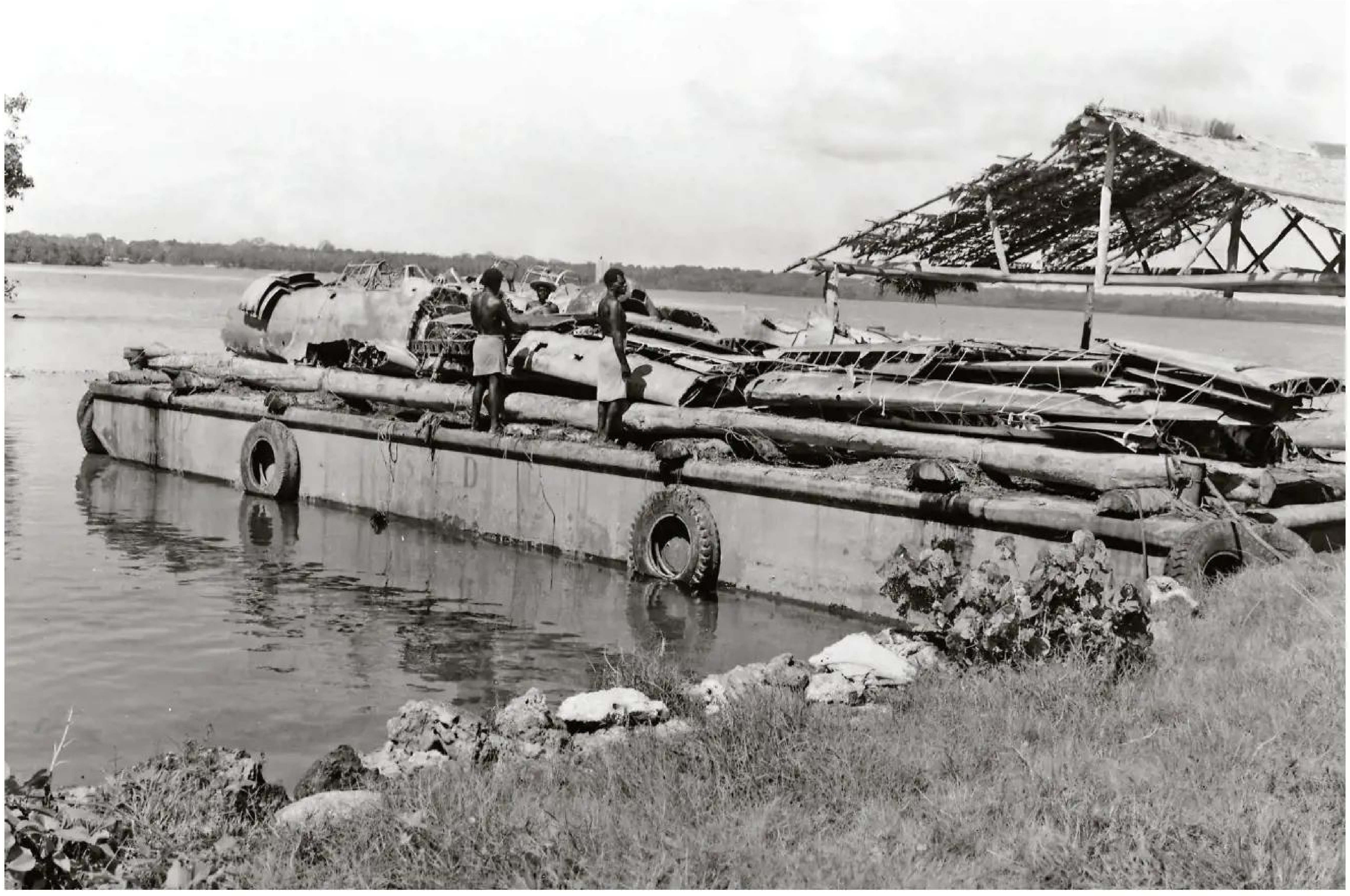
The Zero at the first location of The Air Museum when it was located on Route 66 in Claremont, California. (Doug Fisher)

FOLLOWING SPREAD: John Maloney flying the Planes of Fame Zero over the Chino hills during 2017. This aircraft is the only WWII Japanese aircraft still flying with its original Japanese engine. In a bit over eight decades, the aircraft has flown over 500 hours.

61-120



The Zero on the day of its first post-restoration flight. (Doug Fisher)



Part of Bob Diemert's collection of salvaged Zeros on a barge and ready for transport out of the jungle. (Doug Fisher Collection)

rapidly. Don Lykins made the first flight on 28 June 1978. Then Jim Maloney flew the plane and I was the third to fly it," said Steve. Since then, the aircraft has made three trips to Japan (1978, 1995, and 2012). "The Japanese just loved seeing the plane," said Steve. "We have to remember that most Japanese have never seen a Zero and certainly have not seen one fly. I recall that during the test flights, we used a Mustang as a chase plane. I watched to the two planes start up on the Chino ramp. The Zero kicked over and purred like a kitten. The Merlin started up with a roar and belching flame. I thought to myself that there was no way the Japanese could have ever won the war against American technology."

The Zero has proven to be one of the most popular POF aircraft. It has also been a real money-maker for the museum. "It performed just perfectly during the filming of *Pearl Harbor*," recalled Steve. The Zero has been in other movies, television programs, and commercials and will be flying for many years to come.

BOB DIEMERT AND THE ZEROS

The late Bob Diemert, an early Canadian Warbird enthusiast and restorer, was one of the first collectors to see the value of visiting Pacific islands to salvage the hulks of former Japanese combat aircraft. Beginning in 1968, Diemert visited Balalae Island in Bouganiville and began the search for aircraft. It was an epic salvage that involved a lot of hardship and the cooperation of the Royal Canadian Air Force to transport the planes once they had been moved to an airstrip from the jungle.

Based at Friendship Field in Carmen, Manitoba, Diemert traveled to the South Pacific three times to recover the Japanese hulks. Using local natives, the largest components were cut apart with an axe to facilitate movement to a barge. They were then barged to Port Moresby and stored in a compound at Jackson Airport. A deal was struck with the RCAF to utilize a Hercules to recover the bits and pieces under the guise of a training mission and this was done during January 1969.

The website Pacific Wrecks has compiled a listing of Zero-type aircraft

Bob Diemert pulling his first Zero restoration which would crash on its inaugural flight. (Doug Fisher Collection)

recovered by Bob Diemert. As with this type of listing, there are probably some mistakes because the aircraft were jumbled together but it is certainly the most accurate notation of what was recovered.

ZERO MODEL 21

A6M2 Model 21 c/n 5451, tail code W1-150. Front fuselage and tail section recovered. Cockpit/center section utilized in Zero 5356. Rear fuselage sold to Planes of Fame.

A6M2 Model 21 c/n 3471. Cockpit and portion of rear fuselage recovered. Disassembled at Friendship Field and parts used in Zero 5440 and Zero 5356. Blayd Corporation purchased leftover bits in 1990.

A6M2 Model 21 c/n 2985. Armament panels from nose section recovered and later used in Zero 5356.

A6M2 Model 21 c/n 4362. Parts include left horizontal stabilizer and an elevator with component ID of 4362.

A6M2 Model 21 c/n 5355. Components salvaged included damaged rear fuselage that was utilized in rebuild of CAF Zero 5356. Pacific Wrecks noted that a few components from 5355 remained on the island during 1991 including a nose gun cover that was in the weeds near the wreck of an A6M3.

A6M2 Model 21 c/n 5459. Unknown components salvaged including a left wing. In 1990, parts of this project went to Blayd Corporation.

A6M2 Model 21 c/n 6345. Tail cone salvaged, transported to Canada 1969.

A6M2 Model 21 c/n 7830. Pieces from this Zero were transported to Canada during 1969. Nose 7.7mm machine gun access door used in restoration of Zero 5356.

A6M2 Model 21 c/n not known. Navy Patriotic Presentation Number of1045 assigned to this aircraft, which was "donated" by a Japanese printing company. Center section, rear fuselage transported to Canada 1969. Parts used in restoration of Zero 5450 and Zero 5356.

ZERO MODEL 22/32

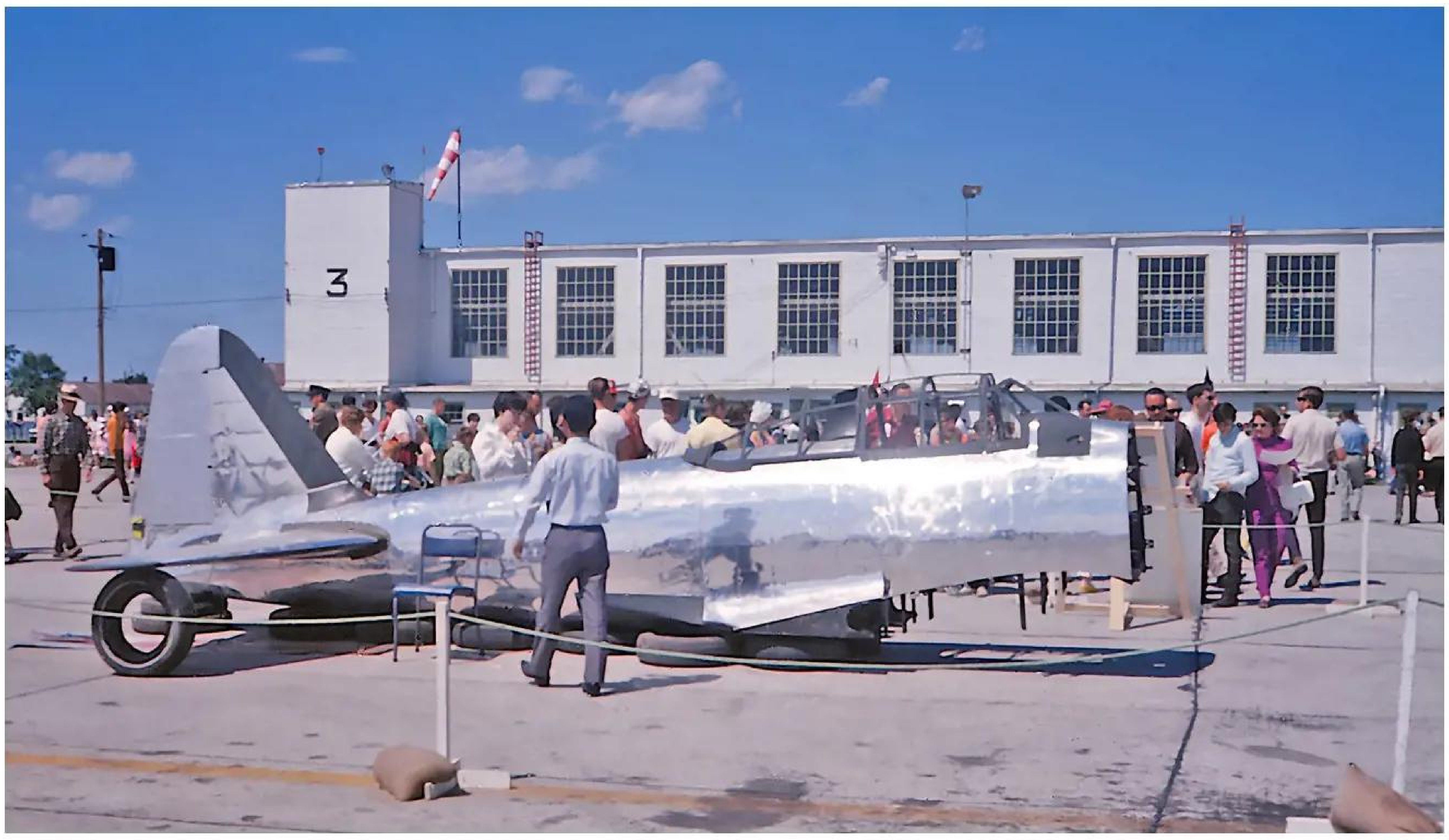
A6M3 Model 22 c/n 3753, tail code 103. Horizontal stabilizers, rear fuselage transported to Canada 1969. During salvage, fuselage was cut between Station 9 and Station 10. Parts were sold to Blayd Corporation in 1990. Pacific Wrecks notes that in 2007 what was possibly the last remains of this aircraft were illegally exported from the island.

A6M3 Model 32 c/n 3285, tail code 3-174. Tail, section of fuselage, possibly wings salvaged including blunt wing tips. Parts possibly utilized in restoration of Zeros 5450 and 5356.

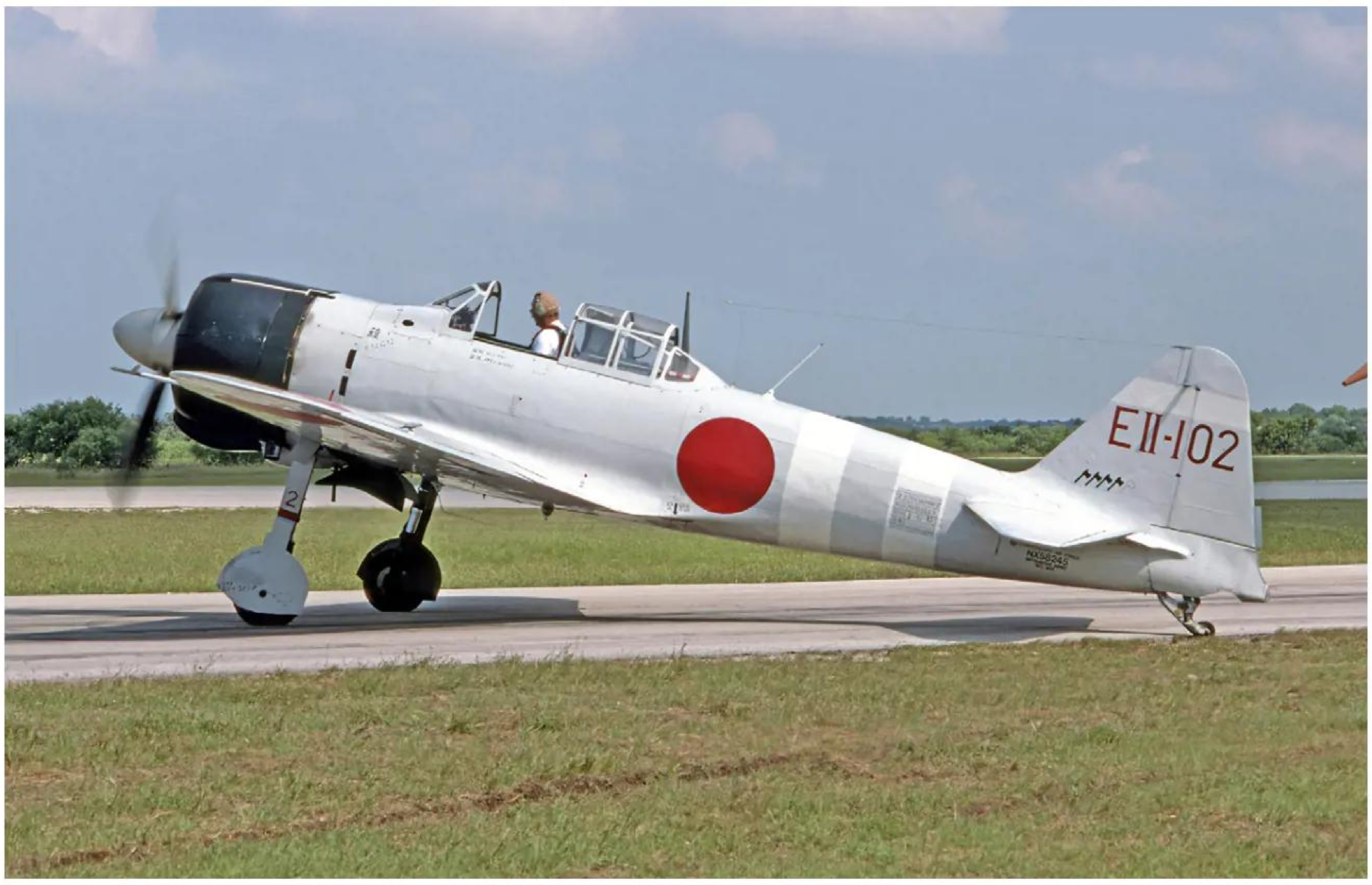
When the Zeros were back in Canada, A6M2 Model 21 c/n 4461 (this c/n is probably not accurate and it's probably a number on a component data plate) was restored with an R-1830 and underwing Sabre drop tanks (!). It was basically a real lash-up and many of the components came from non-aeronautical sources. This machine was the first Diemert Zero flying restoration. The aircraft made its first flight on 20 September 1973 as CF-

Jason Soames flying the Commemorative Air Force's Flight Magic Zero N553TT near Malibu, California, prior to flying the aircraft on its epic trip to Alaska. From that point, it was placed on a ship and sent to Japan where it participated in aerial displays flown by Skip Holm. (M. O'Leary)

AI-112
NX553TT



Diemert's second Zero restoration. Gentleman in front of the aircraft is Jiro Horikoshi, designer of the Zero. He brought a set of plans to help Diemert restore the plane. (Doug Fisher Collection)



The second Diemert Zero when operated by the CAF. Photo was taken shortly before the plane was grounded because of an unsafe airframe. (Doug Fisher)

GVT but due to poor workmanship, the gear folded on landing and it was damaged. Components of this aircraft then went to Zero c/n 5450.

Once again, 5450 is a jumble of recovered components and the number probably comes from a serial on a component part. During 1973/1977, this plane was restored to static condition including parts from the other hulks. It originally went to the USMC Museum. It later went to the National Museum of Naval Aviation and was then loaned to the Mid-America Air Museum in Liberal, Kansas. This should not be viewed as a "restored" aircraft but rather a mocked-up hulk.

Zero 5356 was the second Diemert flying Zero restoration. Knowing they were not going to find another Zero in flying condition, members of the Confederate Air Force contacted Bob Diemert and a contract was drawn up that saw the restoration of A6M2-21 with the American experimental civilian registration of NX58245. The plane made its first flight on 12 August 1985 and was delivered to Harlingen, Texas, where Lefty Gardner did the test work.

This particular aircraft was not an exacting restoration in any way and the "roughness" of the rebuild worried some pilots. In 2002, the CAF Zero was at the Southern California Wing located at Camarillo Airport and the decision was made to ground the plane for another restoration. The Zero was sent off to Aero Trader where it was taken apart. "The condition was pretty terrible," said Carl Scholl. "Parts of the tail were held on with pop rivets, there was a fair amount of corrosion and some of the horizontal tail spar material was missing. I am surprised that the plane did not come apart in the air while being flown by the CAF." At this point, the decision was made to permanently ground the Zero and it found a new home at the Pacific Aviation Museum.

BLAYD ZERO

As noted above, much of the Diemert Zero left-overs was sold to the Blayd Corporation in Carmen, Manitoba, Canada. Blayd had come up with the idea of using the left-overs to create entirely new components, assisted by blueprints provided by Mitsubishi in 1994. It appears that some 14,000 new parts were crafted and Blayd announced they were going to make enough parts for three of the "new" Zeros with thicker skins and other improvements. They stated that some 60,000 manhours would be required to complete each plane. Mitsubishi also sent engineering students to assist in the project.

Blayd soon discovered that the project was much more difficult (and more expensive) than originally planned. In 2000, the project was sold to a consortium led by Gerry Beck who completed the aircraft with hydraulics, instruments, and a P&W R-1830. As N8082K, the aircraft made its initial flight on 29 July 2004.

During 2016, the Zero was struck by a Corsair while taxiing. This did considerable damage to the rear fuselage and tail. Repairs were undertaken by AirCorps Aviation in Minnesota. Several publications have listed this aircraft as a "combat veteran." It is certainly not. Blayd always stated this aircraft was going to be a replica so it should be viewed as that. After going through several owners, the Zero is now owned by the Timmermans collection in Canada.

FLIGHT MAGIC ZEROS

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about many new business opportunities for Americans as well as a new generation of Soviet entrepreneurs. One of the most

The Blayd Zero in flight. From the start, this aircraft was labeled as a reproduction.

interesting was the creation of a company named Flight Magic. This was a combination of David Price of the Museum of Flying, Alan Preston, and Bruce Lockwood. Flight Magic's first project stirred up a lot of interest in the aviation press. Working in conjunction with the Yakovlev firm, the decision was made to restart production of the Yak 3 fighter, one of the Soviet Union's most effective fighters of the Great Patriotic War. Trying to find enough Klimov V-12 engines was going to be impossible so the decision was made to use zero-time Allison engines fitted with DC-3 propellers. Bruce Lockwood was in charge of production and setting up the manufacturing program. "Yakovlev had amazing capabilities," recalled Bruce. "The company had been engaged in making military aircraft and airliners but the economic collapse meant they were scrambling for work and the Yak 3 production program came about at just the right time."

While all this was going on, Bruce "Indiana" Fenstermaker approached Flight Magic with a most interesting proposition. Fenstermaker had mounted an expedition to Babo Island near Indonesia to recover the hulks of Japanese warplanes. Babo has seen heavy fighting during the war and the jungle was littered with damaged Japanese aircraft. Through a great deal of hardship, Fenstermaker managed to recover three Zeros, a Tony, a rare Betty bomber, and other artifacts. Lockwood continues the story, "Bruce saw what we were doing with the Yaks and thought that a similar program to restore the Japanese aircraft would be worthwhile. He was really a decent fellow concerned with preserving these relics.

"All the Japanese aircraft were moved to Clover Field in Santa Monica and we set up a program to restore the Zeros that included A6M3-22 c/n 3852 (N3852), A6M3-22 c/n 3869 (N712Z) and A6M3 c/n 3858 (N553TT). We laid out the components on the hangar floor and then picked the best airframe with which to start and work progressed rapidly. It was obvious that many of the parts would have to be replicated because of combat damage and corrosion and we estimated that on the first aircraft, it had about 30% original components. The second had about 22% original parts while the third was at about 15%. We had also received some Sakae radials but determined that it would make a lot more sense to go with the R-1830 powerplants although we did get one Sakae running.

"As time went on, it became obvious that these aircraft were going to take a lot of time and money to complete. Using an economy of scale, we made the decision to ship the planes off to Russia to join the Yaks. For course, the Russians were thrilled to get the extra work.

"Work on these planes proceeded quickly and the airframes were shipped to southern California and Fighter Rebuilders completed work on the first aircraft (N712Z) and the initial test flight was done by Steve Hinton. N3852 went to the Flying Heritage Collection and was converted to a two-seat battlefield reconnaissance configuration by Fighter Rebuilders. N553TT and N712Z were extensively flown in the film *Pearl Harbor* and I flew almost 60 hours and never had a mechanical problem during some really difficult flying conditions. N712Z is now with the Commemorative Air Force while N553TT is with the Fagen Fighters Collection. N553TT was flown from southern California to Alaska and from that point it was shipped to Japan and flown by Skip Holm during several displays."

So, along with the newly flown Hamp we now have six flying Zero variants. There are several more candidates available for restoration but whether that will happen is pretty much a function of time and money. **AC**

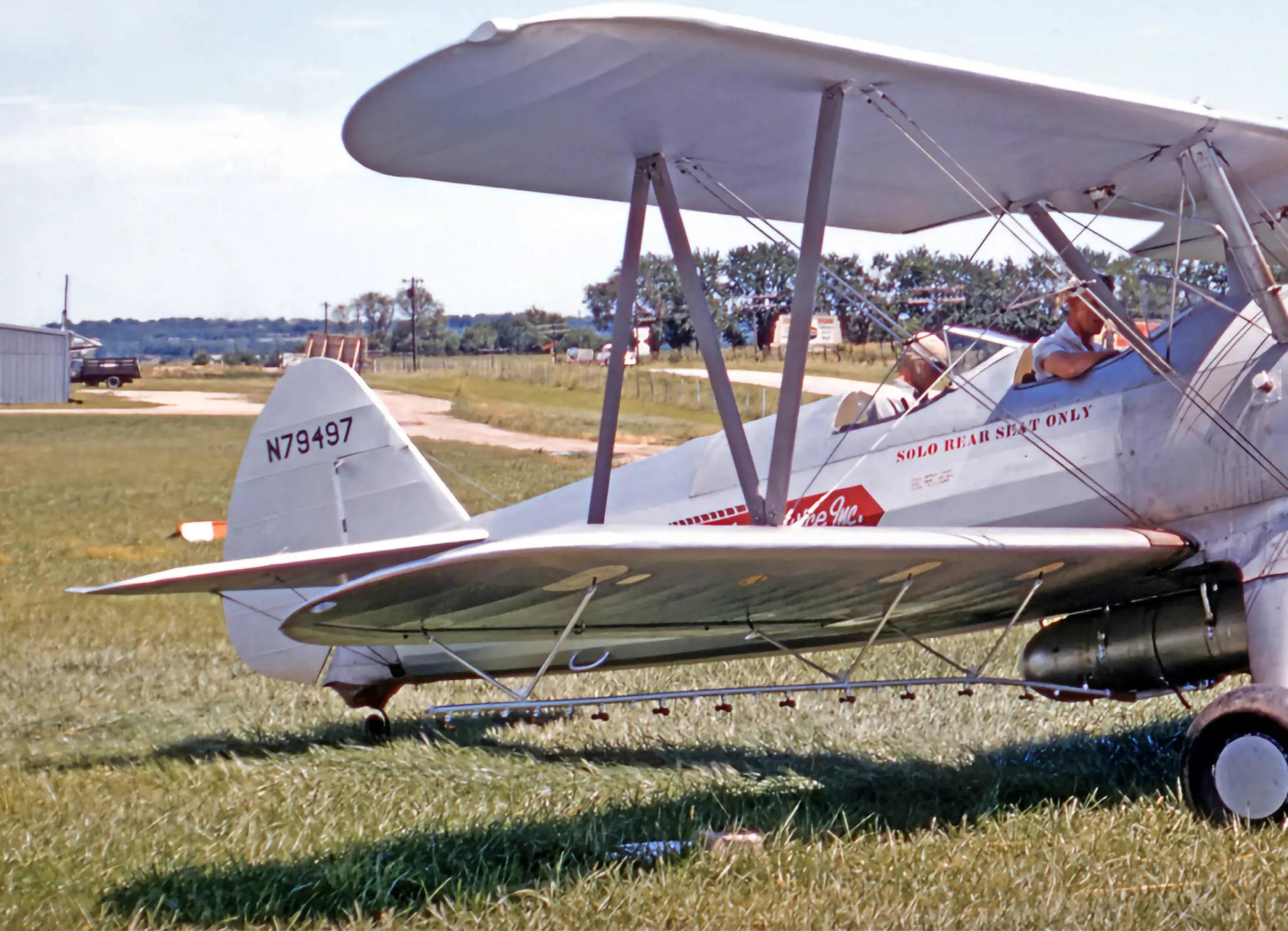
FOLLOWING SPREAD: Jason Muszala piloting the Flying Heritage Collection's Flight Magic Zero. This aircraft had been converted into a a two-seat battlefield reconnaissance aircraft by Fighter Rebuilders. Small numbers of Zeros were modified in the field for this role. (Jim Larsen)

UI-161

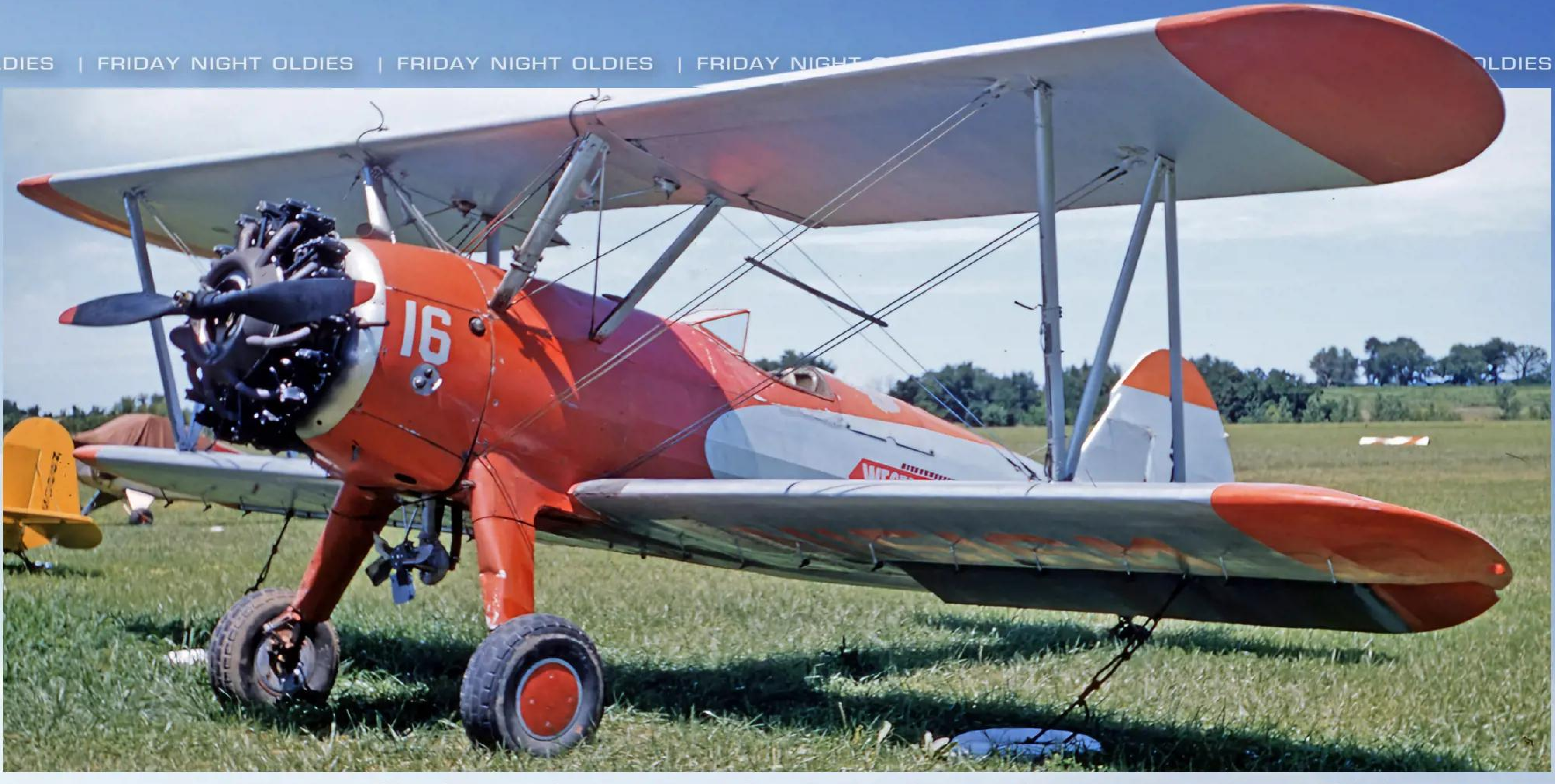
FRIDAY NIGHT OLDIES

BY DOUG FISHER

SURPLUS EX-MILITARY AIRCRAFT LONG BEFORE THEY BECAME MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR RESTORATIONS

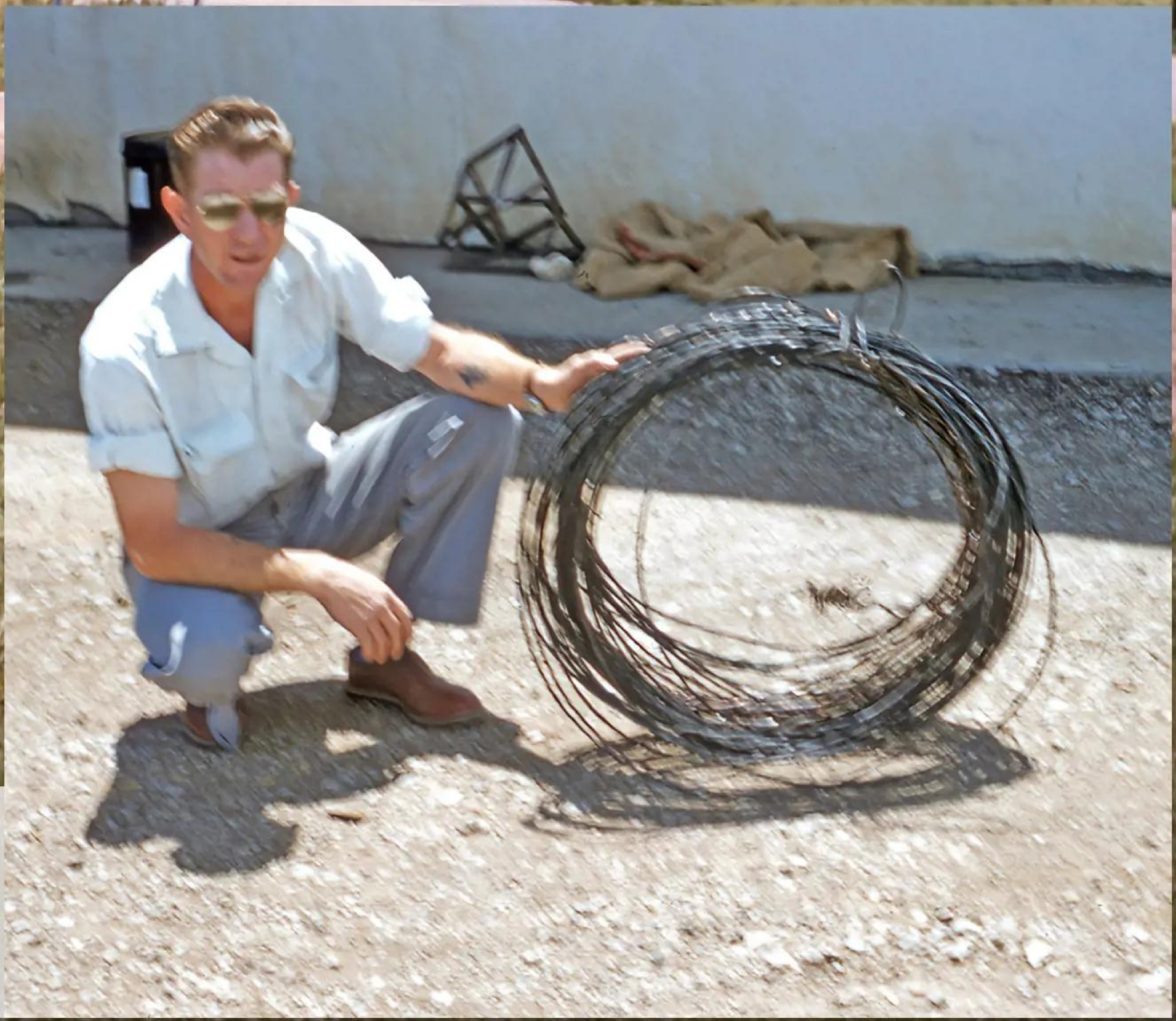


This photograph almost fits into our recent series on roadside aviation attractions. The location is Fort Pierce, Florida, with the date July 1956. A main road is right next to the airfield, replete with a sign for the local State Farm Insurance representative. We have run numerous photos of Stearmans being used as ag aircraft but never one like this. The plane is basically stock and the overall aluminum doped finish may well be its military paint. What is interesting is that this is a two-seat sprayer and the chemicals are being carried in a "drop" tank fixed to the centerline of the fuselage. The usual modification would have the tank fitted in the front seat position. A large "SOLO REAR SEAT ONLY" has been painted under the cockpits. We asked our resident Stearman expert Larry Johnson about the Kaydet and he stated, "N79497 is c/n 75-7989 and is ex-Navy N2S-3 BuNo 38368. It appears to have been sold surplus to Robert L. Van Alstine in Charlotte, Michigan, with the registration NC79497. NC changed to N around 1950. The Stearman's registration was changed to N161J in the 1960s when it was with Mid-South Flying Service in West Monroe, Louisiana. N161J was cancelled on 14 January 1977. What is neat about this aircraft is that one of my restoration projects is its sister ship, c/n 75-7988 N66299. I got the aircraft from famed aerobatic designer Curtis Pitts when he lived in south Florida and shortly before he passed away."

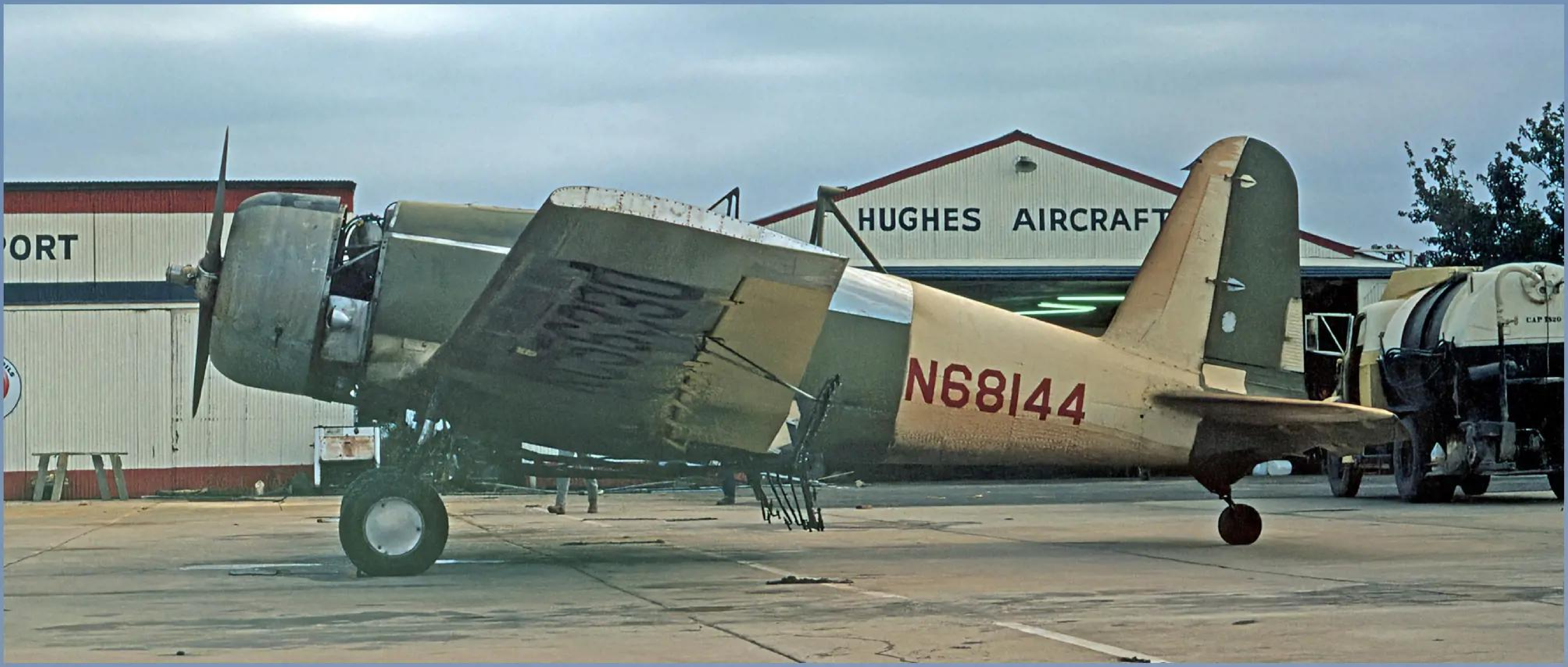


It appears this photograph was taken at the same location and time as our main image. This Kaydet is also relatively stock and does not have the 450-hp R-985 and other BT-13 modifications that most of the Stearman ag aircraft would carry. The registration appears to be N1516M, even though it and the operator's name are partially blocked out by the angle but the reason the photo was taken is obvious when one looks at the landing gear legs. Both are heavily dented while there are a few rips in the fabric on the bottom wing and the spray booms are missing. N1516M was an N2S-5 c/n 75-8385 BuNo 43291 and it was destroyed on 27 August 1964 a9as N121J).

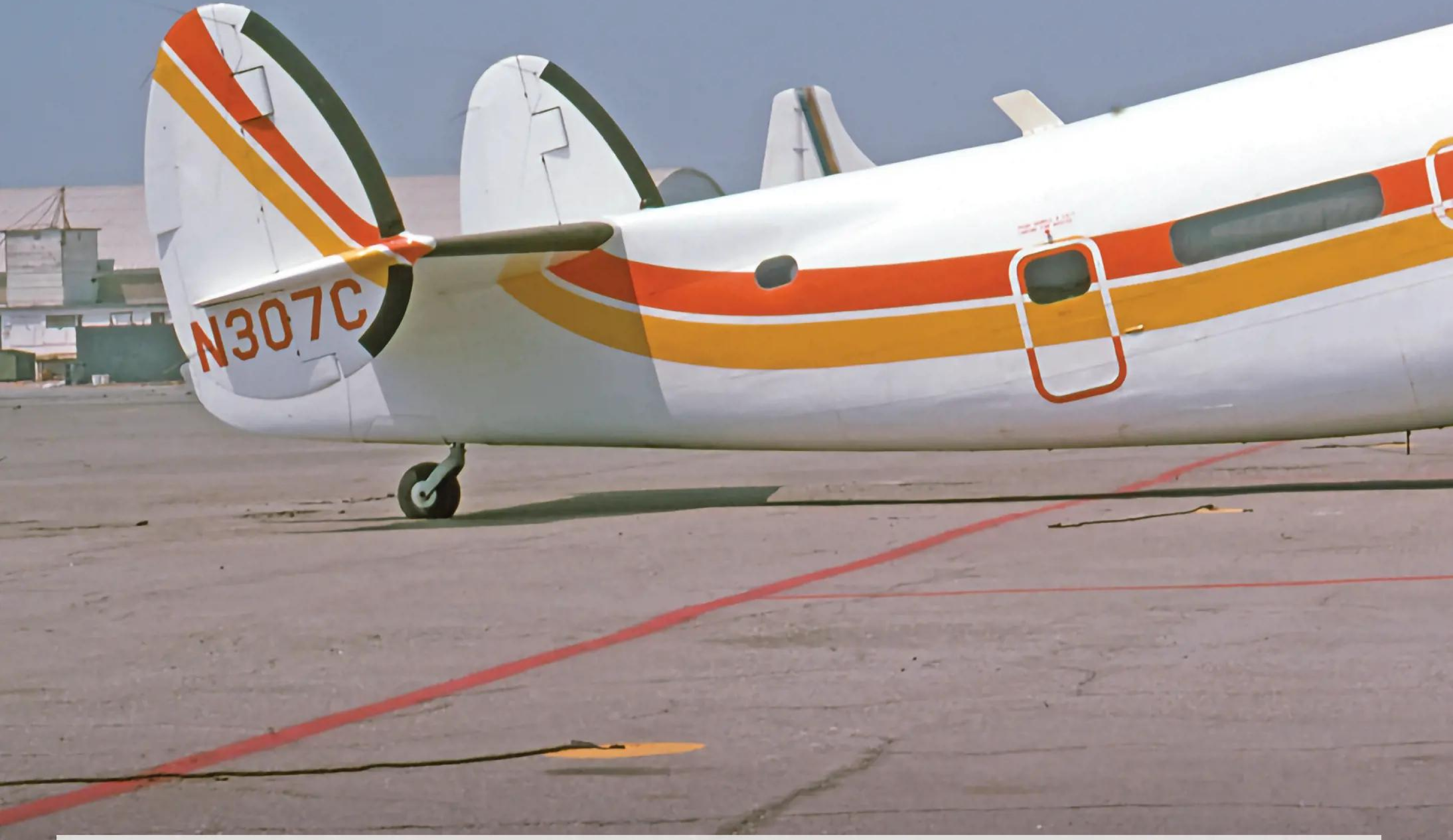
97
STATE FARM
INSURANCE



The reason for the dents — the pilot holds a roll of barbed wire from a fence that the Stearman flew through while spraying. That gives a good indication of just how low he was and is a excellent illustration of the hazards of the profession.

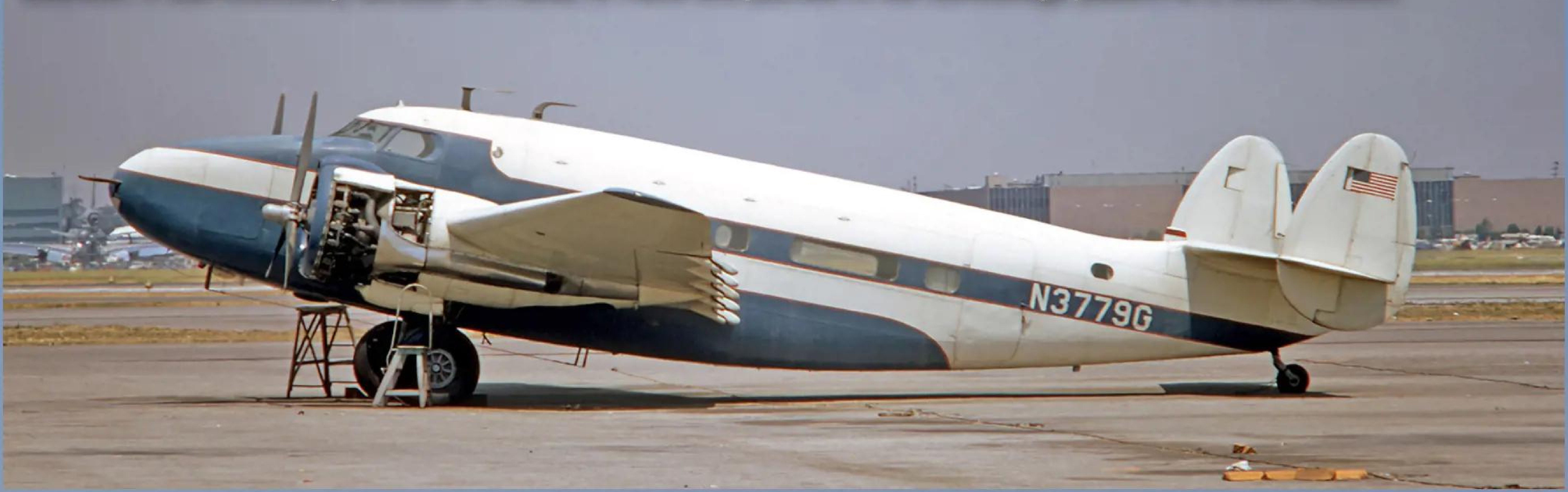


During the 1970s, Ray Pool operated several highly modified Vultee BT-13 Valiants from his base at Madera, California. Surplus BT-13s usually wound up as being organ donors for Stearman ag aircraft but Ray was one of the few operators that actually used the BT in the ag role. Pool was a local legend and had flown B-17s during WWII. After the war, he rounded up wild mustangs using an aircraft but was involved in a 1948 crash that cost him an eye and a foot. It took some time to heal but when he did, Ray got into farming and crop dusting. "The old BT was ideal for me," Ray recalled. "They were cheap, plenty of parts, and I modified them just the way I wanted." At age 95, Ray passed away as one of the first victims of Covid-19. N68144 sports numerous modifications including clipped wings, single open cockpit, and an R-1340 from a T-6 Texan. Built as 41-1581, the BT was eventually withdrawn from ag service and in 2001 it was one of two BTs purchased by Egmond Aircraft in Holland. Both are very slowly being restored to flying condition.

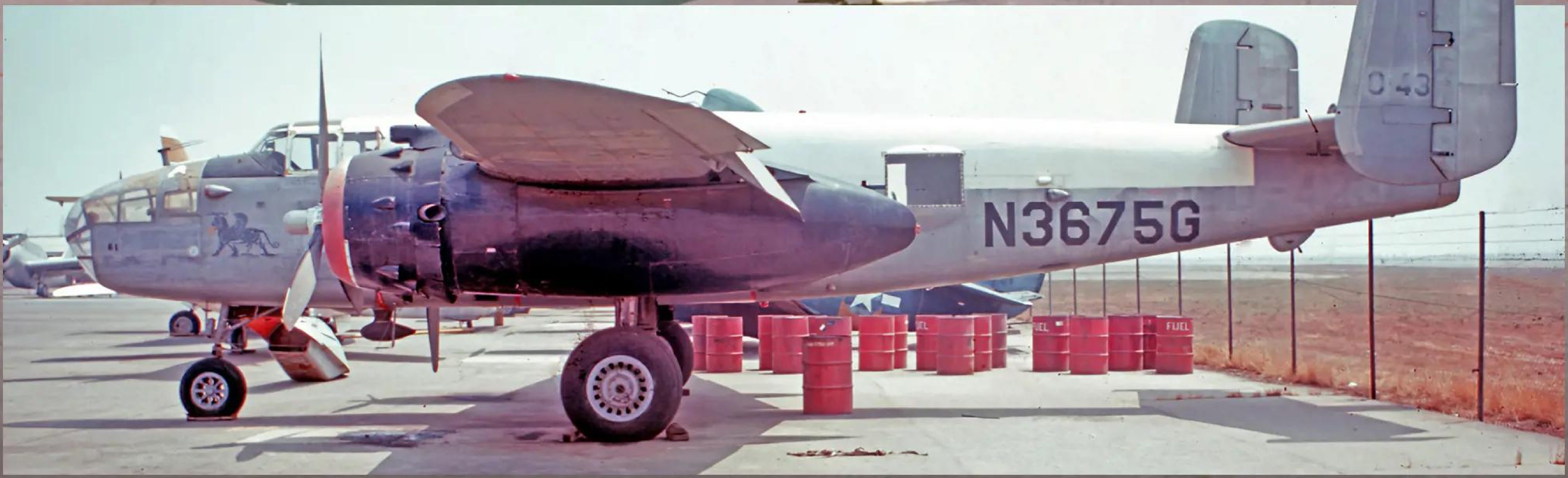


During the 1970s, several well-known Warbird owners would arrive at Chino Airport in a variety of modified Lockheed Lodestars. They loved the old Lockheeds because of their speed, carrying capacity, and long-range. However, they had little to no regard for the actual aircraft. The pilots were major drug runners and the Lodestars were ideal for flight to and from locations "south of the border." Built as C-60A-5-LO USAAF, the aircraft was sold surplus at the end of the war and became NC18934. The Lodestars were prized for conversion to executive transports and this C-60 became N777W and then N141PA before being modified as a Learstar and being completed on 17 February 1962 as N307L. The Learstar modifications really upped the performance of the Lodestar and this was another real plus for the drug runners. N307L was one of at least a dozen Lodestars owned by a well-known Warbird pilot who had his Mustangs restored and maintained at Chino. N307L did not have long to live after this photo was taken. On 21 November 1976, the aircraft flew into the ground near El Rodore, Sinaloa, Mexico, while on a drug run.

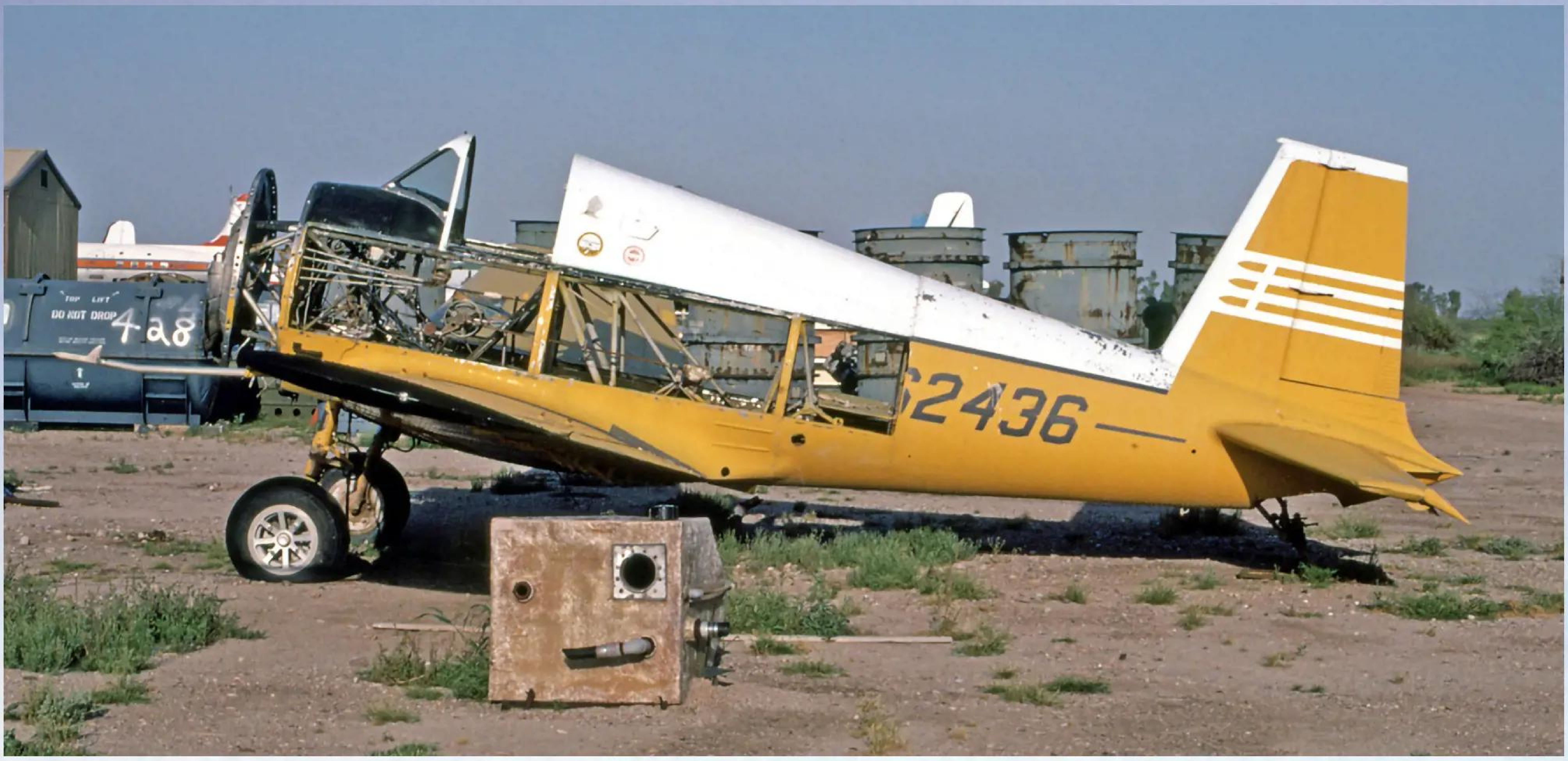
Lockheed Lodestar was a long-time resident at several southern California airports including Long Beach where it was photographed during the late 1960s. Built as C-60A 42-032181, it seems that the plane was sold surplus to Mexico and became XB-BOC and then XA-GUH before returning to the USA where it was registered as N3779G in Alaska. On 17 April 1969, it was landing at Port Hardy, British Columbia, after an engine failed. The Lodestar ground-looped and damage was substantial. It was repaired and N3779G eventually found a home on the ramp at Chino Airport where its condition went downhill. It was eventually donated to Planes of Fame and painted in the camouflage pattern of a WWII Hudson.



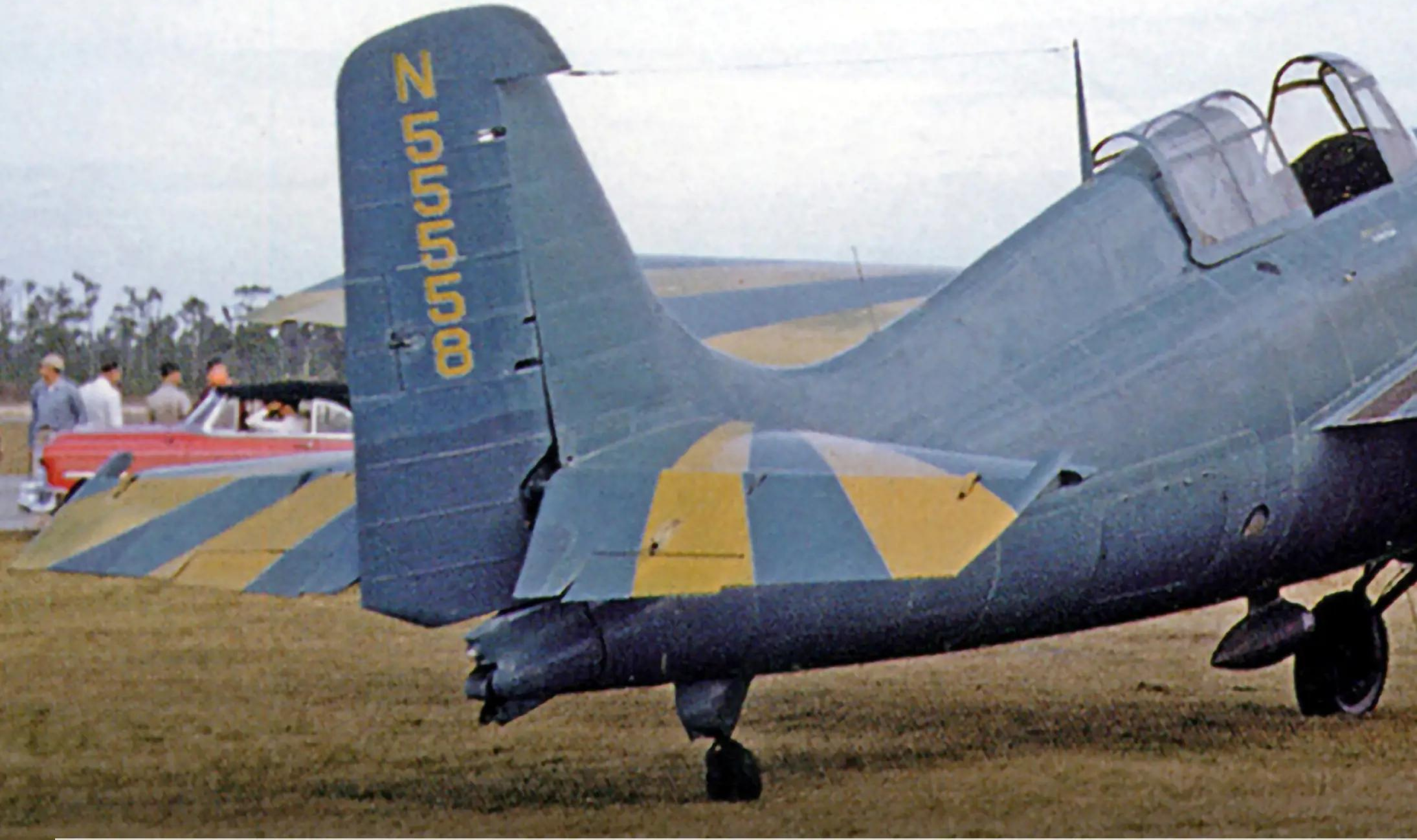
AERO SPORT
COAST GUARD



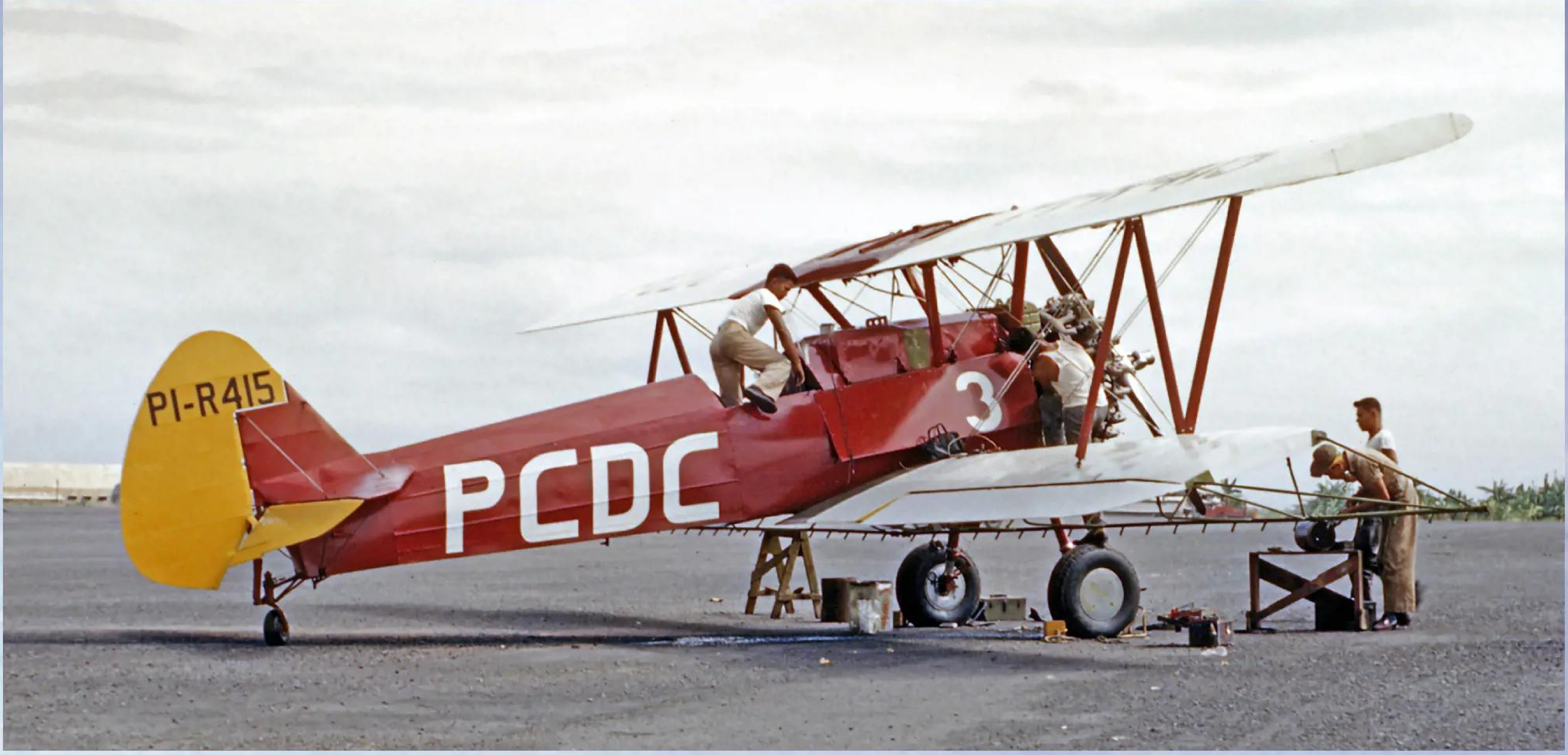
When The Air Museum moved from its original location at Claremont, California, to its new home at Ontario, much more hangar and ramp space became available. One of the first aircraft to fly into the new museum was B-25J-25-NC USAAF 44-30423 N3675G. This Mitchell served Stateside during the war as a trainer with the designation TB-25J. For various new missions it became an EB-25J and then a JB-25J. In 1958, it was flown to storage at Davis-Monthan AFB prior to being put up for auction. It was sold in July 1959 as N3675G and had a couple owners but by 1965 it was purchased by Ed Maloney for his museum. The aircraft, still showing the majority of its last military markings, was photographed on the Ontario ramp soon after arriving. The plane is now the world-famous *Photo Fanny* camera ship.



Another variation on a theme — this modified BT-13A ag aircraft is completely different from the one previously illustrated. Photographed at Chandler, Arizona, the airframe has been picked clear firewall forward and the side panels are also gone. This conversion kept the pilot in the front seat and a large turtle deck covered the rear fuselage, culminating in a squared-off vertical. The registration for N62436 was cancelled during 1974.



For the most part, surplus Grumman FM-2 Wildcats during the 1950s were a fairly scruffy lot. When it came to cosmetics, one of the nicest looking examples was FM-2 N55558 with its overall blue-gray paint, yellowish-mustard sunburst trim, and large white registration. Built as BuNo 86680, the aircraft had very few hours when sold surplus to Richard Carlisle who applied this paint scheme (note the ADF loop on the bottom of the fuselage). In 1955 it was obtained by a new owner as N777A who did something rather drastic to the airframe — inside the barrel-like fuselage, he added four passenger seats and four small windows along with an access door. This rather unique modification was actually quite efficient. As

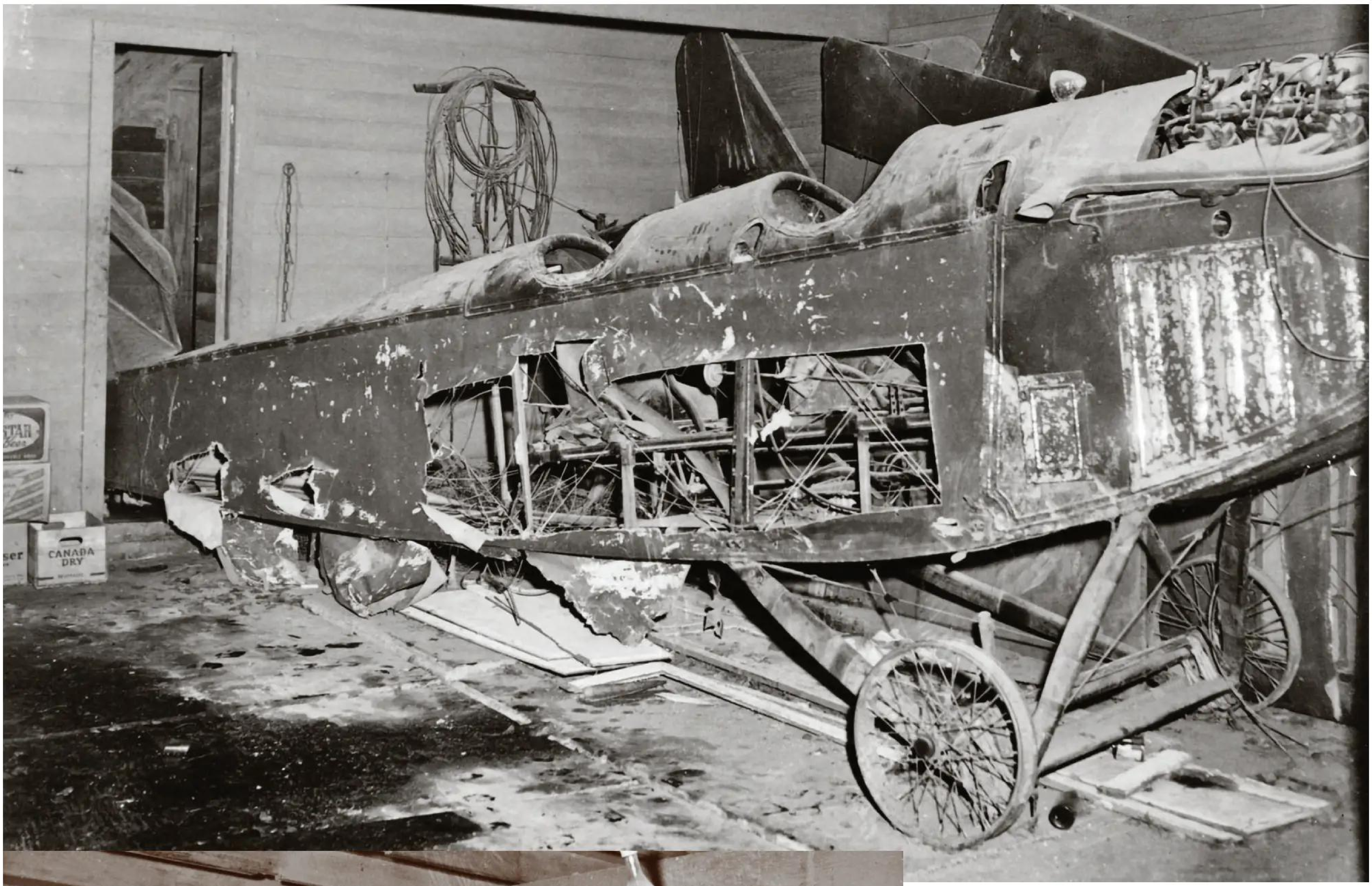


Carrying the Philippine registration of PI-R-415, this Boeing Stearman PT-17 has a number of interesting spray mods. First, the spray bars on the bottom wing extend out several feet past the wing tip and certainly offered a wide swath of spray. Secondly, the bottom of the fuselage has had formers and longerons removed to create a flat bottom, the purpose for which is not known.

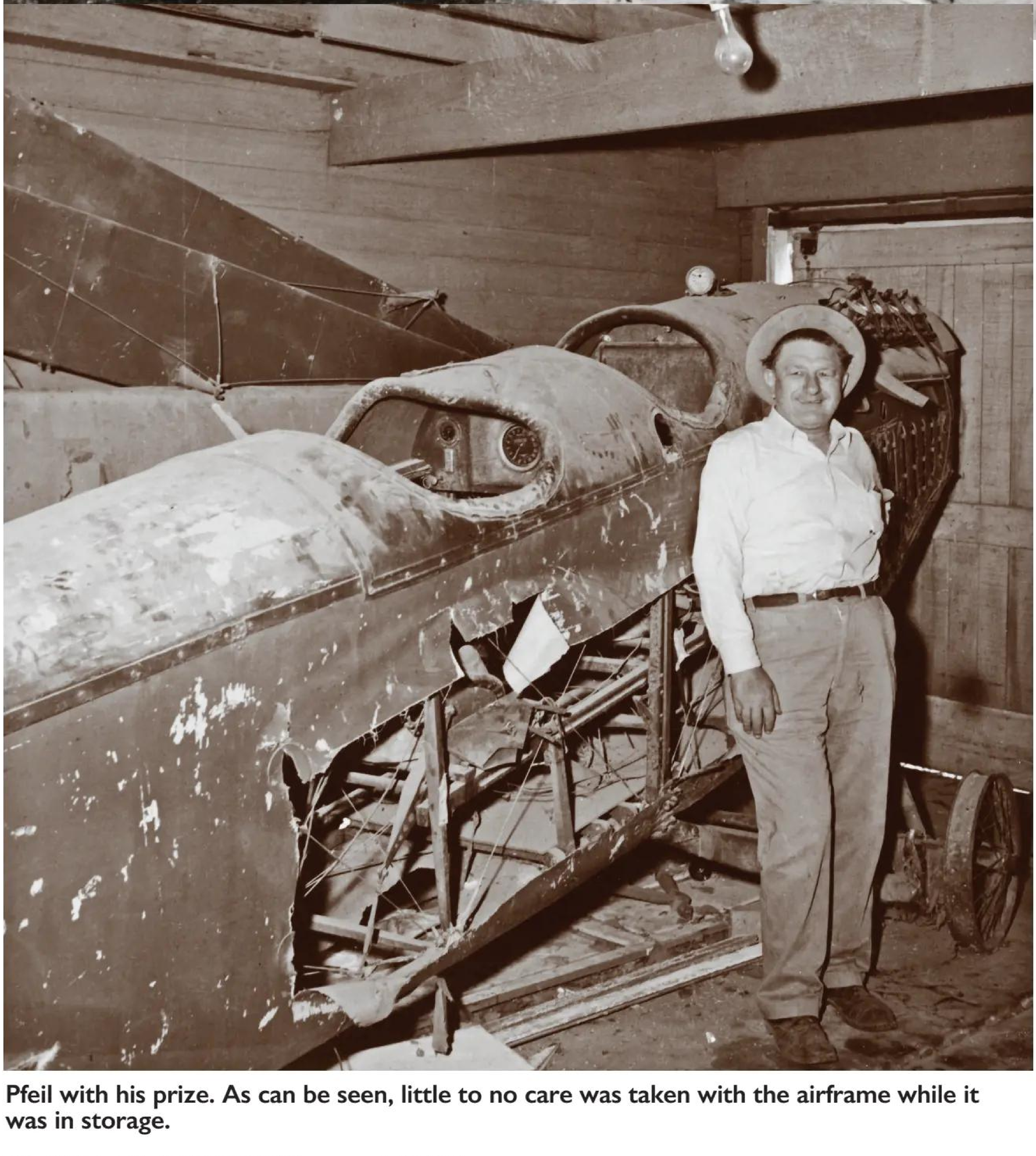
time went on, it became YV-T-OTO, YV-T-HTJ, and N11FE. On 29 June 1975, the pilot was making a low pass down a river near South Haven, Michigan, when he flew the Wildcat into the water. The plane quickly sank but the pilot scrambled to safety and the FM-2 was raised shortly afterwards. Fortunately, damage was not as bad as it could have been. In 1976, it was obtained by noted military, Grumman, and Warbird pilot Dick Foote who applied a military scheme and flew it to many airshows. In 2020, the aircraft was obtained by the Collings Foundation/American Heritage Museum. The plane is currently for sale with Platinum Fighters. **AC**

DAYTON'S JENNY

(continued from page 16)



This is how the USAF Museum found their Jenny. Several decades of being stored in a non-climate-controlled garage had not done the JN-4D any good.

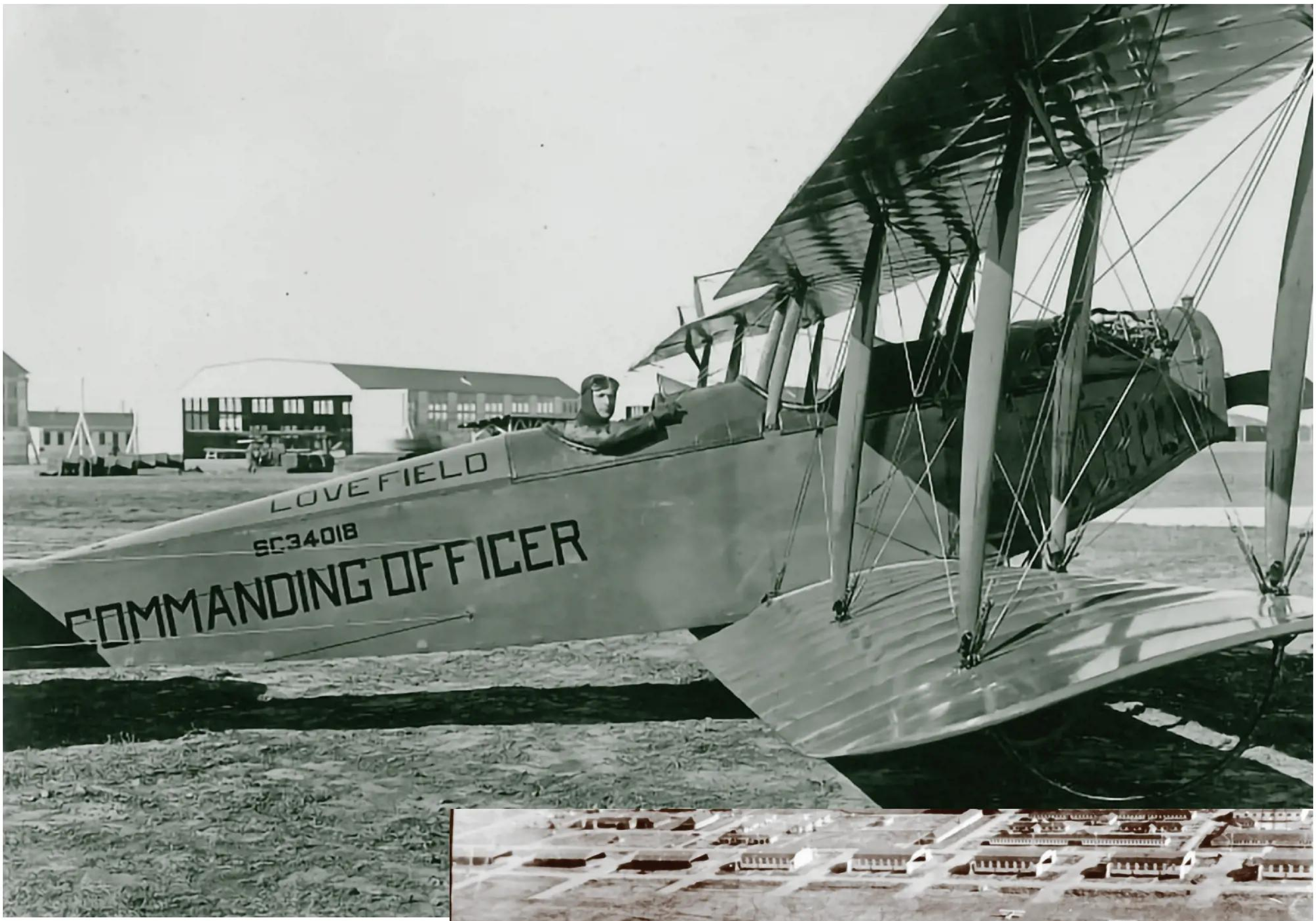


Pfeil with his prize. As can be seen, little to no care was taken with the airframe while it was in storage.

At that time, Pfeil lived in Taylor, Texas, and he moved his prize to a field in town. It appears that the aircraft carried the Army serial of 2805 but we have not been able to find out if the Jenny ever received a civilian license. Virtually nothing is known about the aircraft's military life and one has to wonder is this is one of the many JN-4Ds that never made it out of its Curtiss packing crate. During this time period, numerous aircraft flew without a civil registration and surviving photographs of the plane do not show a registration.

Pfeil appears to have painted the plane in an overall color — perhaps red — and began flying his prize. According to records held by the National Museum of the USAF, Pfeil appears to have used the Jenny for flying locals and many of these individuals made their first ever aircraft flight in the Jenny. Whether he did this as a business or just for pleasure is not known.

At some point, Pfeil relocated to Waco, Texas, and the Jenny went with him and was based at Rich Field. This was not just a grass roots operation for Rich Field was a previous Army facility that utilized 690 acres. After the extremely poor performance of Army aircraft in the war with Mexico, President Woodrow Wilson realized that American aeronautics were



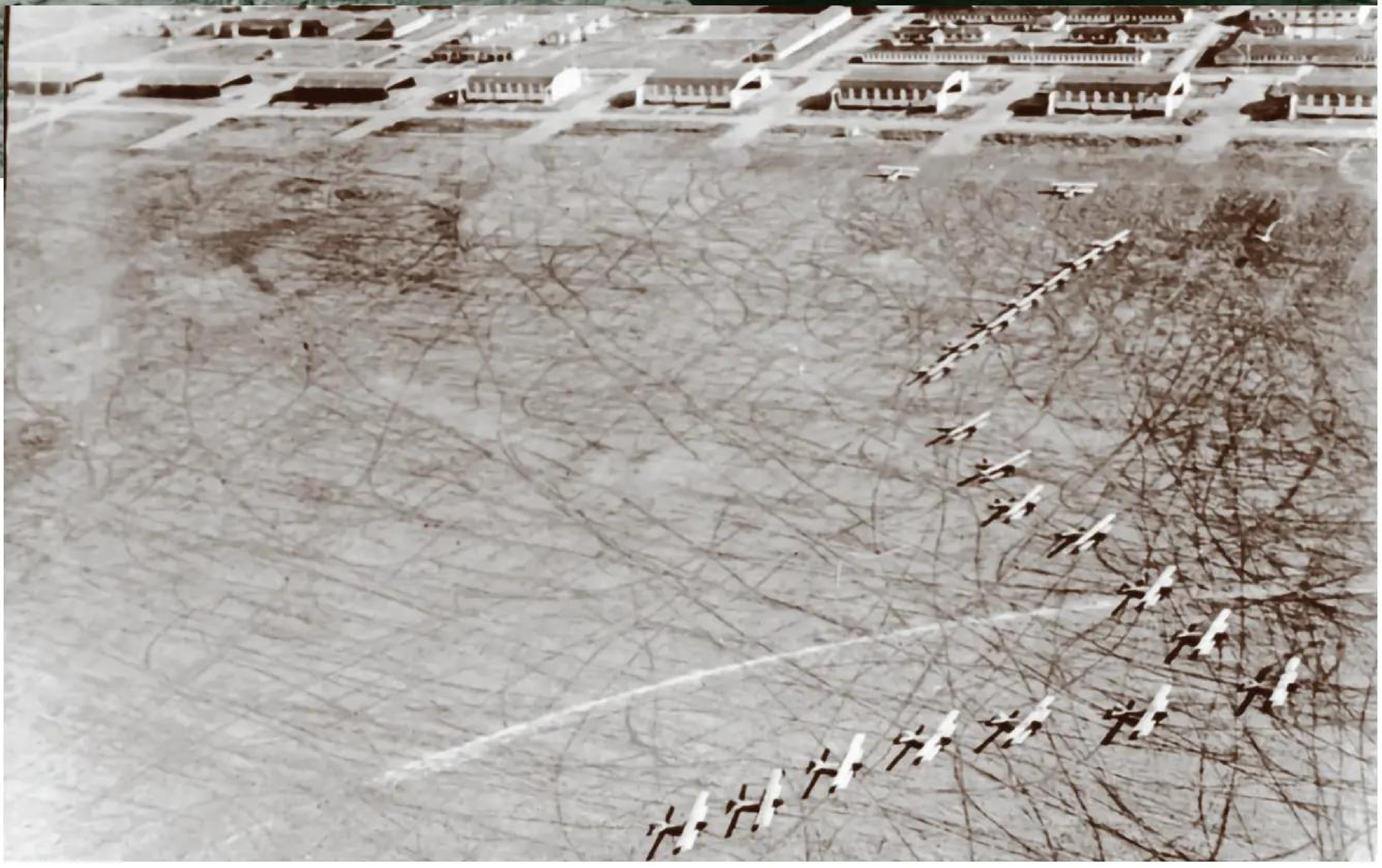
There was no doubt about to whom this Love Field JN-4D belonged. The museum decided to finish their aircraft as a machine stationed at Love Field.

well behind other countries and he approved $640 million to expand the Air Service. This meant training new pilots had to be a priority.

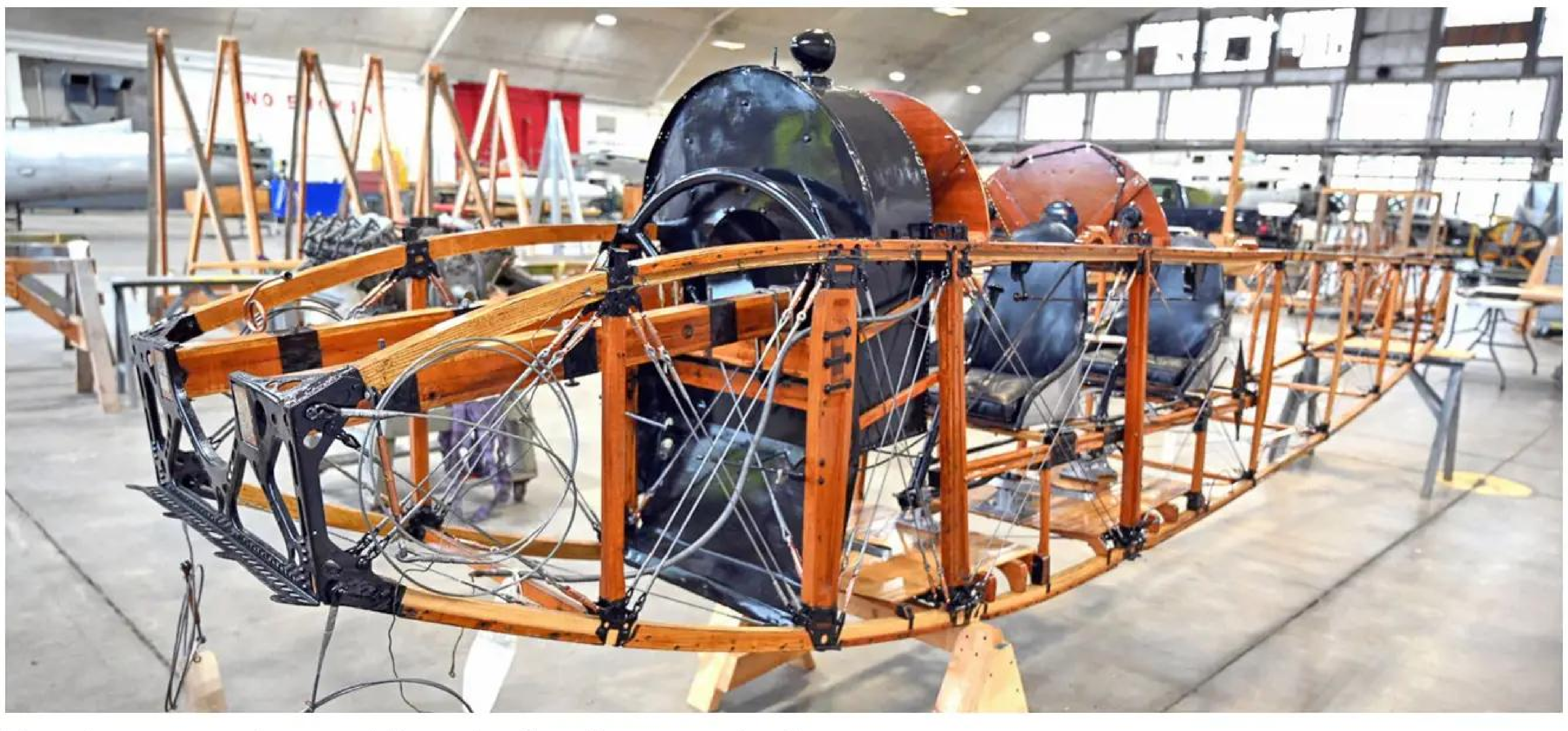
Work proceeded very rapidly and the new field (one of dozens rapidly constructed) was named for 2nd Lt. C. Perry Rich who was killed when his early aircraft crashed into Manila Bay during 1912. In a short time, 16 new hangars were constructed along with associated structures needed to run the airfield. By late November 1917, 25 Standard J-1 biplanes arrived to begin training the first class of cadets but these were soon replaced by the JN-4D.

Along with nearby Camp MacArthur, Rich Field brought 36,000 personnel into the area which was a huge boost for Waco. As typical in the Army, Rich Field soon had its own sports teams and they often competed against their main rival — Love Field at nearby Dallas.

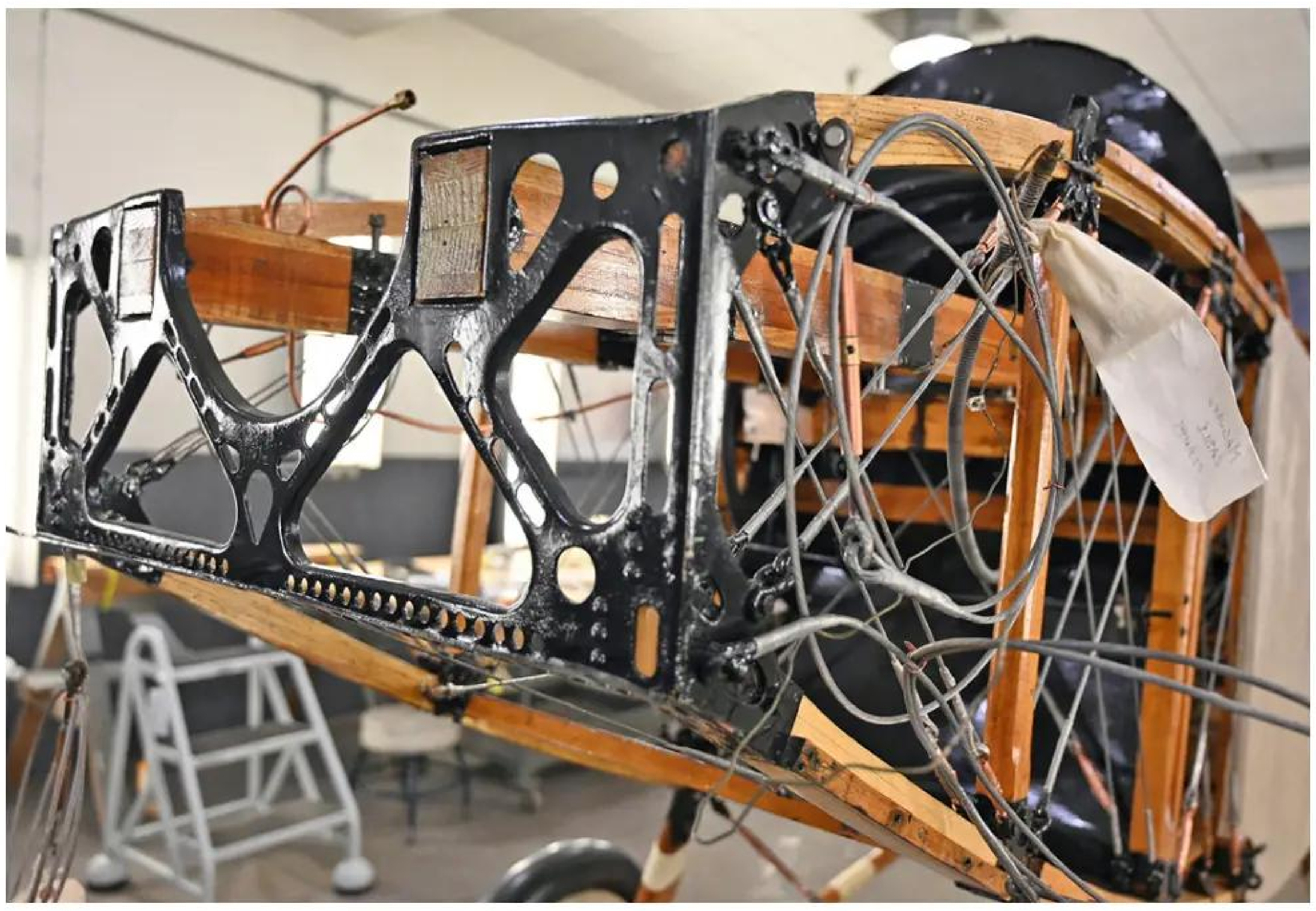
Rich Field had three main squadrons — the 39th, 150th, and 249th Aero Squadrons. Training progressed very rapidly and many of the young aviators were shipped directly to Europe where they joined the American Expeditionary Force while receiving combat training from the Royal Air Force. Some 400 pilots were trained at Rich and most would see combat in the war-torn skies over Europe.



During the Great War, Rich Field became a major Air Service training base with 680 acres in Waco. A flight of JN-4Ds is seen arranged on the field.

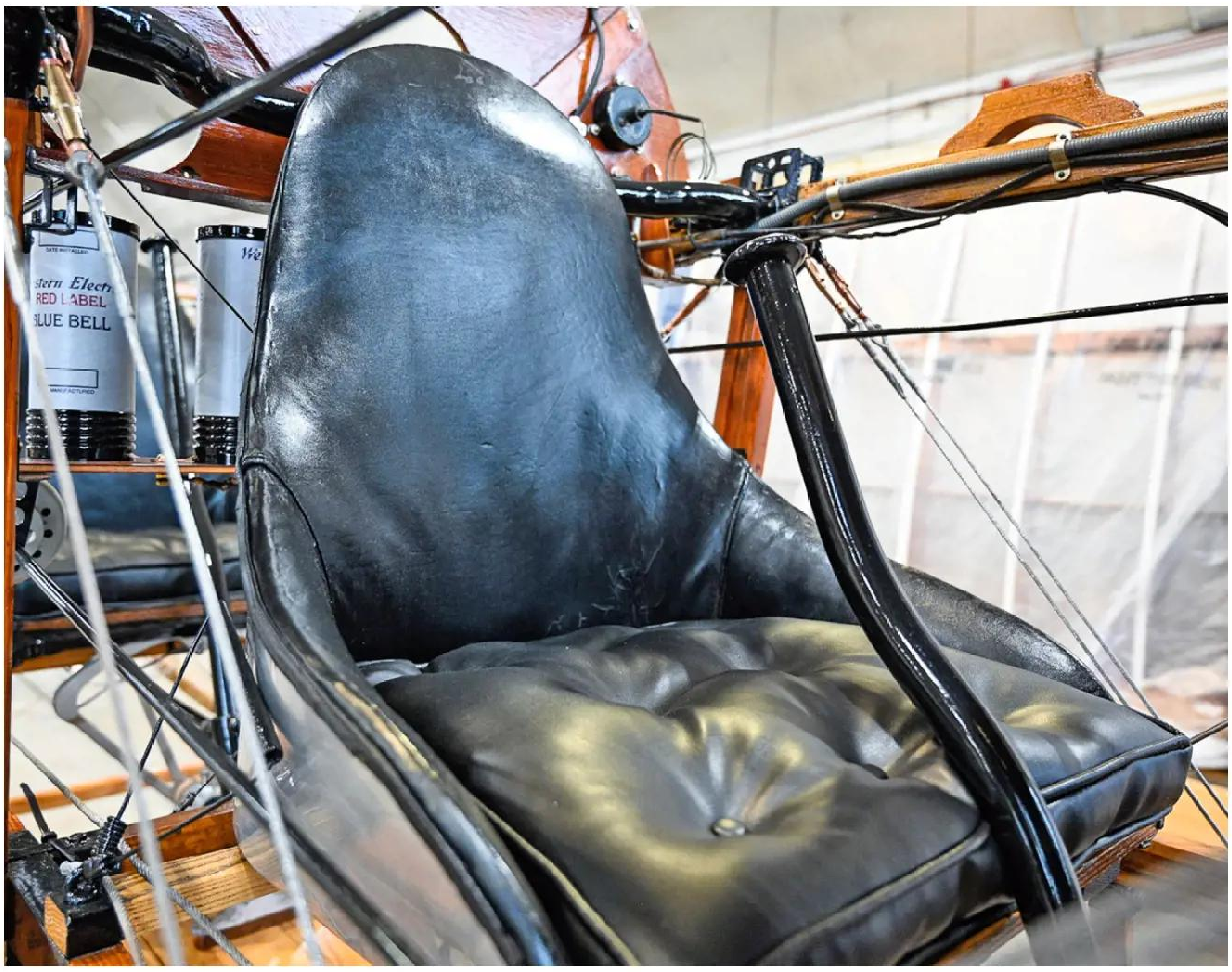


Fuselage complete, adding the landing gear is the next step.



Detail of the supporting structure for the OX-5 engine. As can be seen, the metal motor mount was carefully crafted into the wood structure. The metal components for the Pfeil were conserved and any rusting/corrosion removed before receiving a coat of glossy black paint.

One of the most famous Jenny photos is this shot of Signal Corps 38057 that had an unfortunate meeting with a tree.



Restored seat, control column, and the maze of wooden structure, metal bracing, and turnbuckles.

SPECIFICATIONS CURTISS JN-4D

SPAN	43-ft 7.75-in
LENGTH	27-ft 4-in
HEIGHT	9-ft 10.5-in
WING AREA	352-sq-ft
EMPTY WEIGHT	1390-lbs
GROSS WEIGHT	1920-lbs
AIRFOIL	Eiffel 36
MAX SPEED	75-mph
CRUISE SPEED	60-mph
CEILING	6500-ft
CLIMB	2000-ft/7.5-min
POWERPLANT	OX-5/90-hp

Eight cadets died while training at the field.

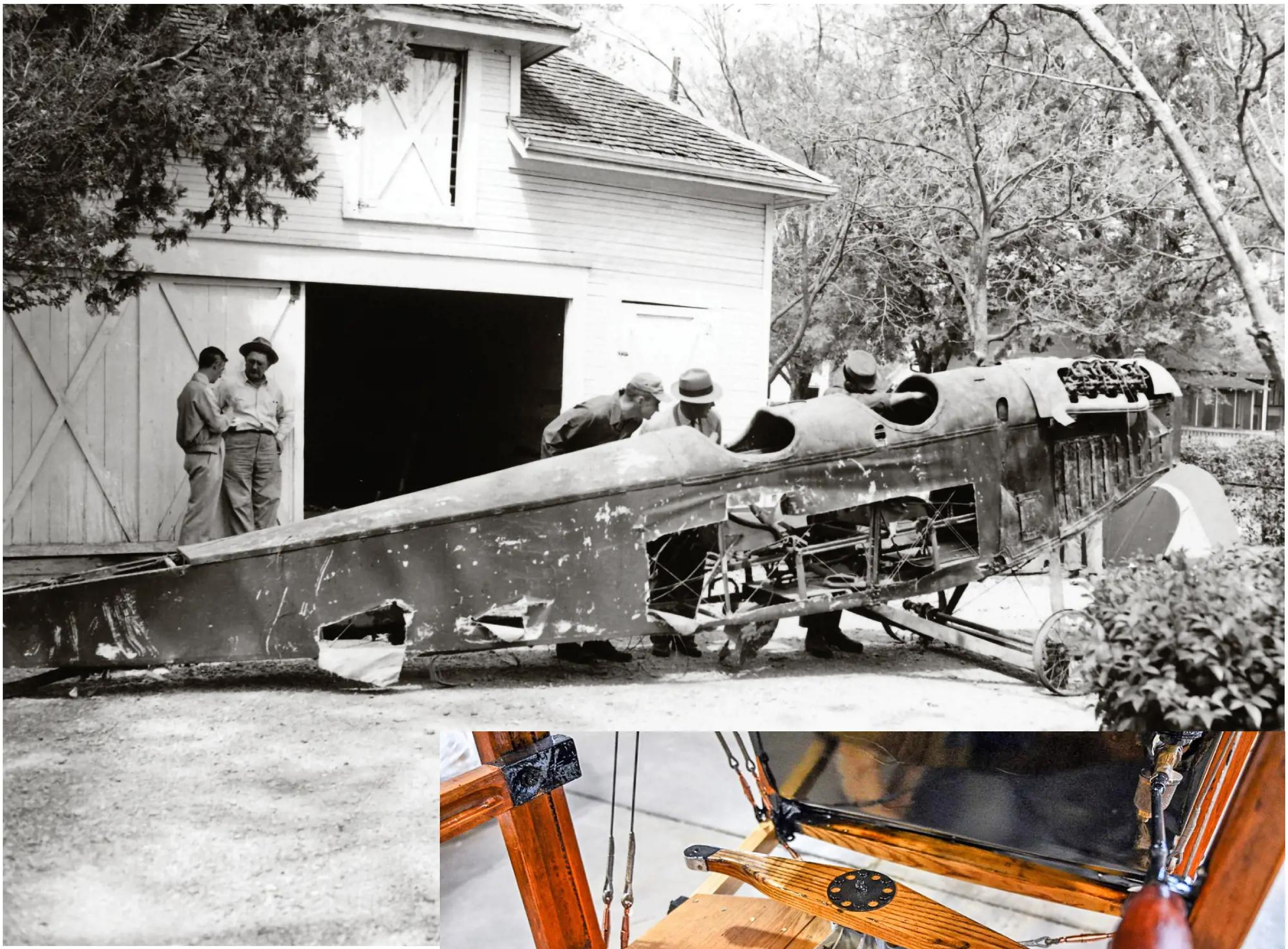
With the end of the Great War, activity at Rich Field drastically dropped off and it was not long before it became the Waco Municipal Airport but locals always referred to it as Rich Field. That is where Pfeil's Jenny found its new home. The aircraft continued giving hops to the locals but the plane was getting very tired and business was dropping off due to the Great Depression.

Reluctantly, during 1936 Pfeil disassembled his faithful mount but he did not want to leave it exposed to the elements. Fortunately, his garage was just large enough for the fuselage with the wings and tail stacked to the side. And there it remained. Little was done to maintain the aircraft. The fabric covering began to tear, rodents made a home in the fuselage, and the tires rotted. Still, it was a complete JN-4D and that was just what the Air Force Museum was looking for.

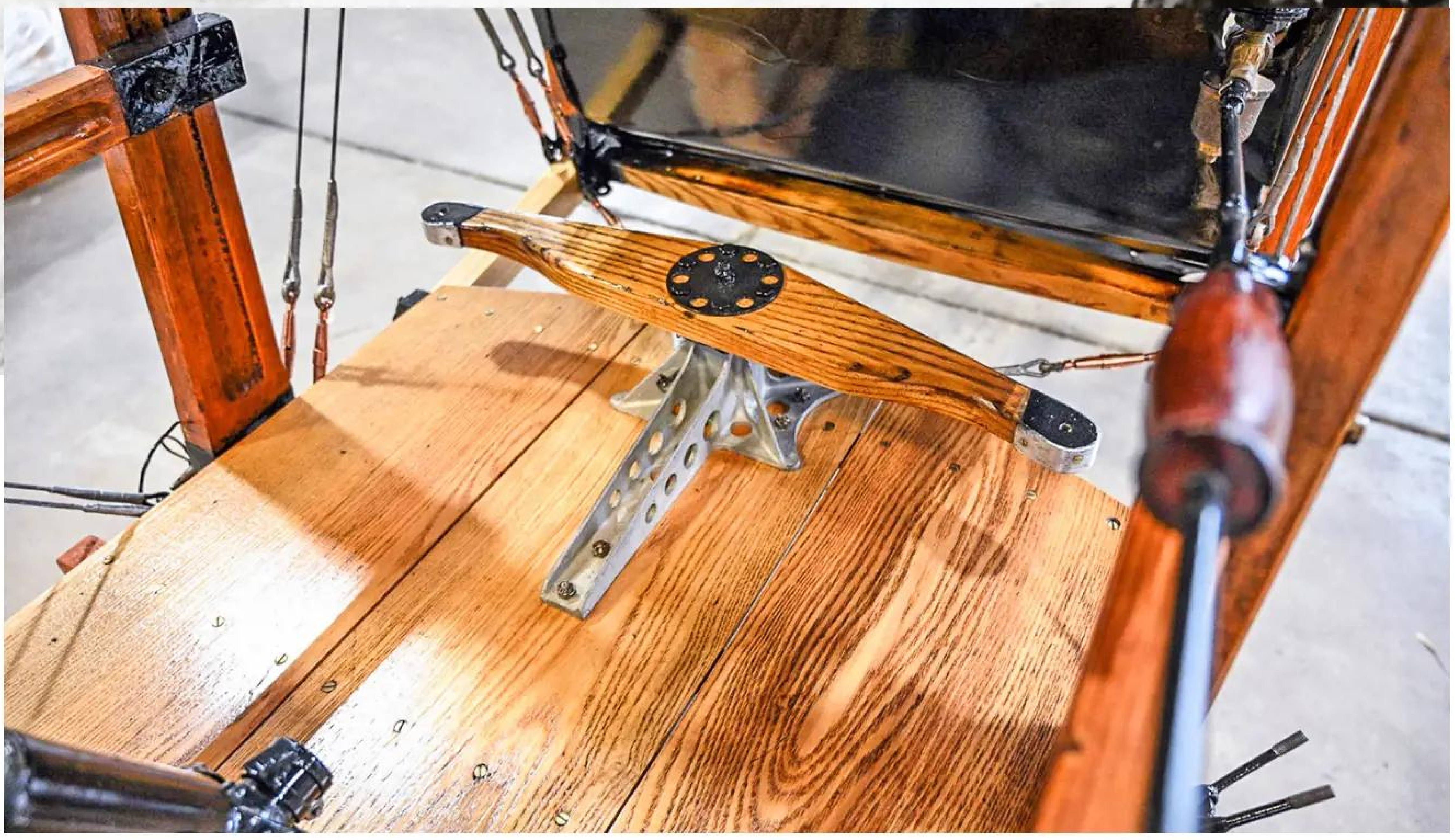
As noted earlier, John Clark notified the museum and a representative visited Pfeil in Waco where a deal was struck although the passage of time has blurred the details.

The Jenny was carefully pulled from its garage home and saw the sun for the first time in two decades. The plane was transported to Dayton where it was restored and put on display, thus filling an important gap at the museum. Finished in an overall Olive Drab scheme, the aircraft was initially displayed on its landing gear but was eventually hoisted aloft into a flying attitude.

Over six decades passed and the staff at the NMUSAF realized some of the aircraft in their Early Years Gallery were not looking so great. During 2012, the Avro 504K replica, Curtiss Jenny, and Thomas Morse S4C Scout were lowered, disassembled, and moved to the museum's restoration hangar with the 504K being the first to receive the restoration process. The restoration team then determined that the S4C was in need of immediate work. That is when Covid-19 hit and work dramatically



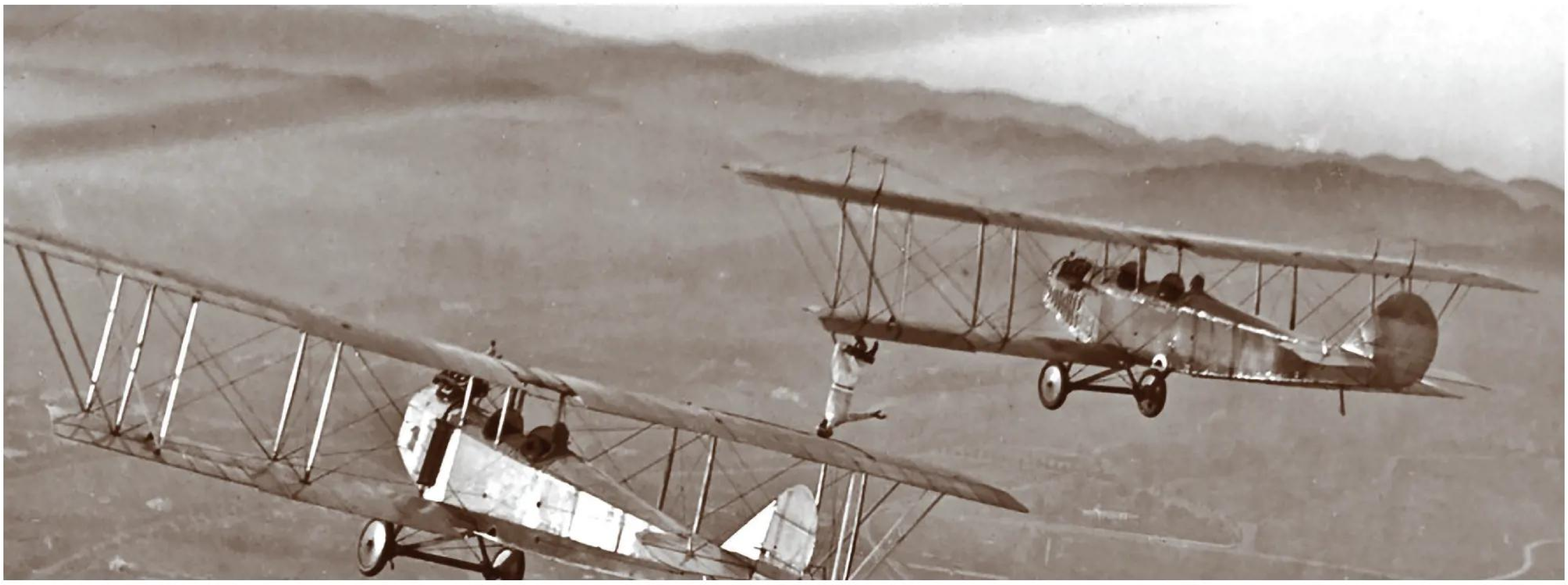
The fuselage after being removed from the garage and being readied for its trip to Dayton.



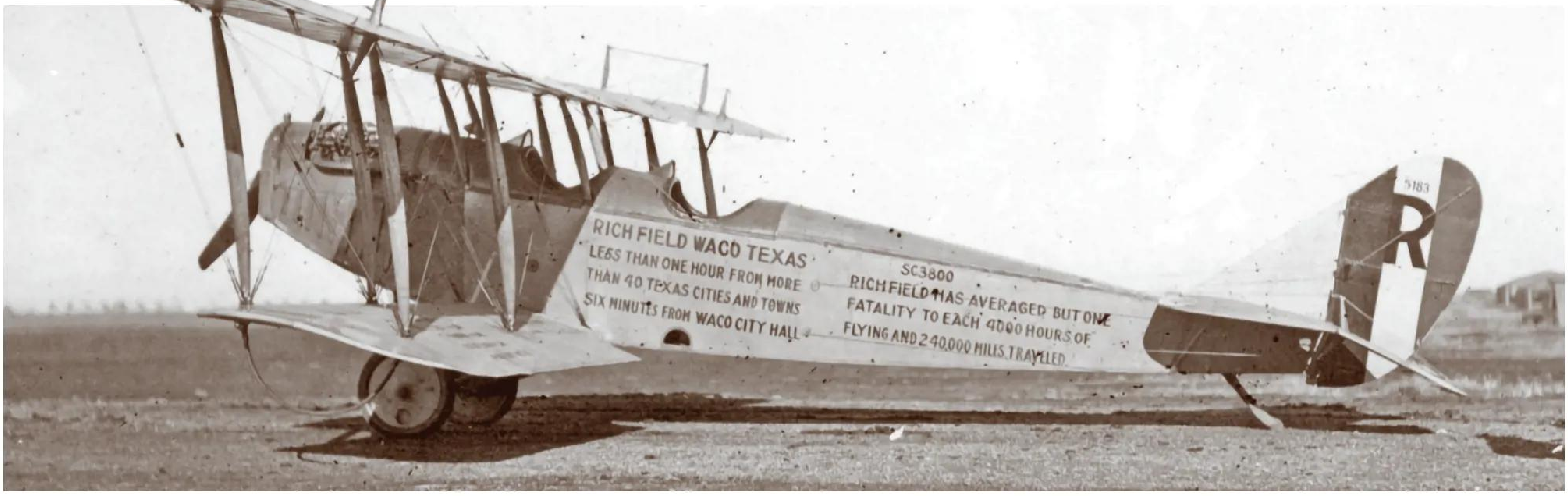
The rudder bar was simplistic at best.

slowed. As restrictions were eased, work proceeded on the S4C and the beautifully reconditioned aircraft was put on display during December 2021. Then it was Jenny's turn.

The original 1950s' restoration was not the way aircraft restorations are done today — and ten years from now they will be different than today. It is just the nature of the beast. All the



Thousands of JN-4Ds and tons of spare parts were sold off after the end of the Great War. This was a huge boost to the growing field of civil aviation. Besides being utilized for barnstorming, Jennies were employed for use in Hollywood. This plane-to-plane transfer (upside down!) was done for a new film and the formation was photographed over the Santa Monica Mountains.

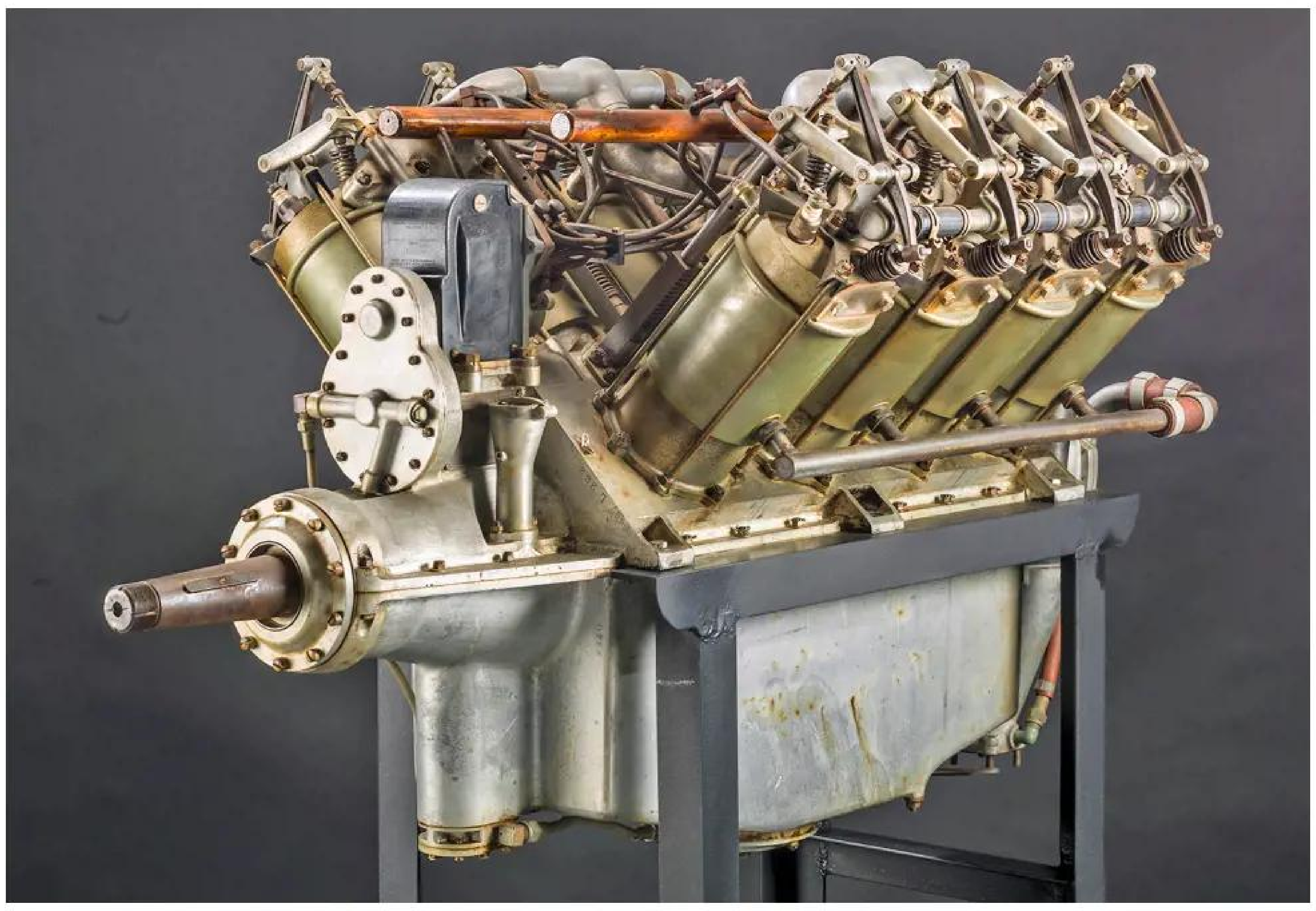

RICH FIELD WACO TEXAS
LESS THAN ONE HOUR FROM MORE THAN 40 TEXAS CITIES AND TOWNS
SIX MINUTES FROM WACO CITY HALL
SC3800
RICHFIELD HAS AVERAGED BUT ONE FATALITY TO EACH 4000 HOURS OF FLYING AND 240,000 MILES TRAVELLED
5183
R

Rich Field JN-4D SC3800 (the rudder appears to be a replacement since it carries the serial 5183) was somewhat of flying billboard since wording states it is "less than one hour from more that 40 Texas cities and towns… six minutes from Waco city hall… Rich Field has averaged but one fatality to each 4000 hours of flying."

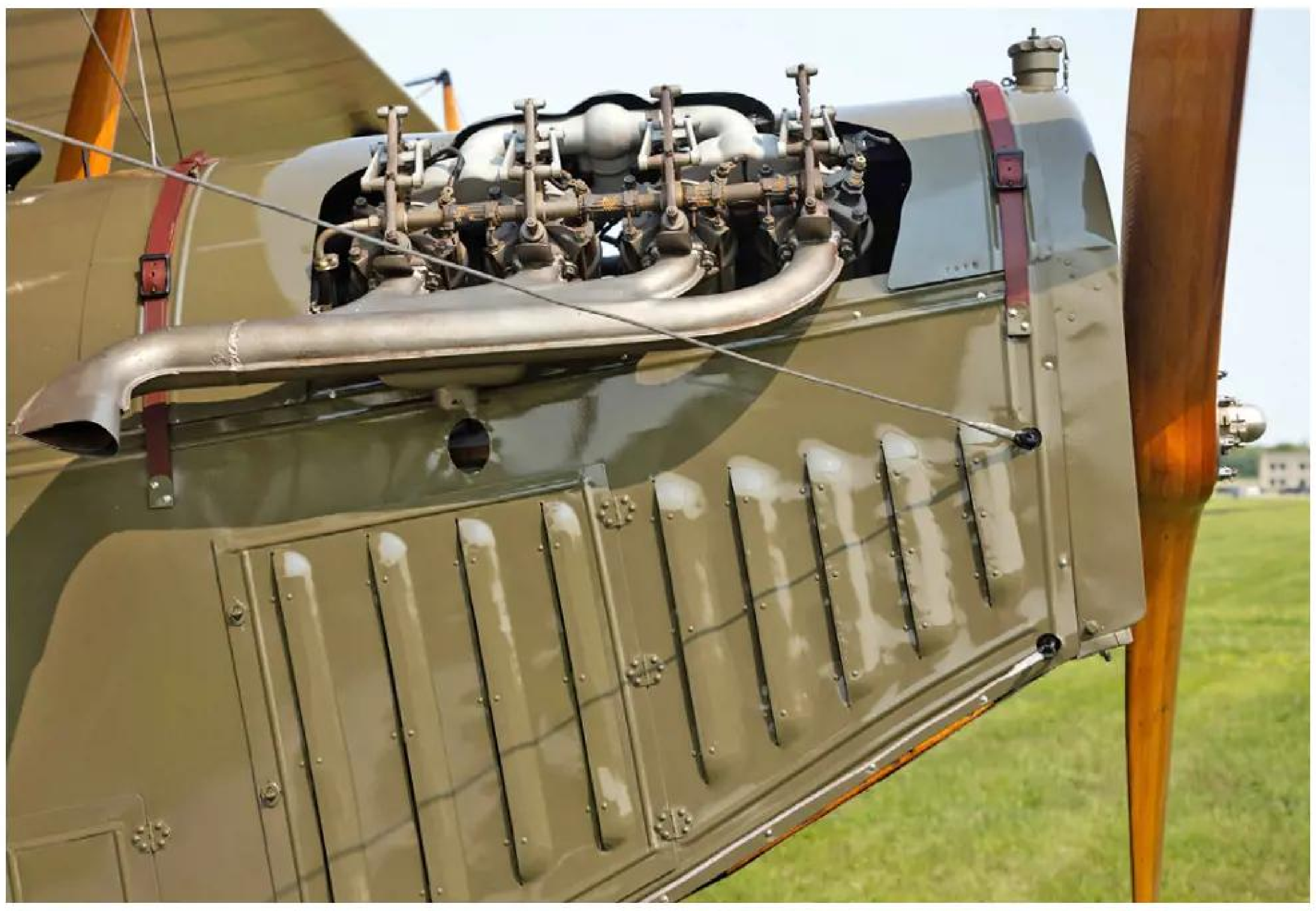
fabric was removed and the wooden structure carefully examined for any signs of decay. Also, the metal fittings were removed, cleaned, repainted, and reinstalled.

The aircraft was extremely original and the same for the Curtiss OX-5 powerplant, which was also cleaned and detailed. When it came time, the wings, tail, and fuselage received a new fabric covering. Since the military history of this particular aircraft could not be discovered, it was decided to finish the plane as a trainer with the Air Service serial of 4037 that operated out of Love Field in Dallas during the Great War.

The masterpiece of early American military aviation was completed in 2023. The Jenny was rolled outside for some photographs before carefully being reinstalled in the museum for all to see for decades to come — serving as a memorial to the first group of brave young Americans that went aloft to fly for freedom. **AC**

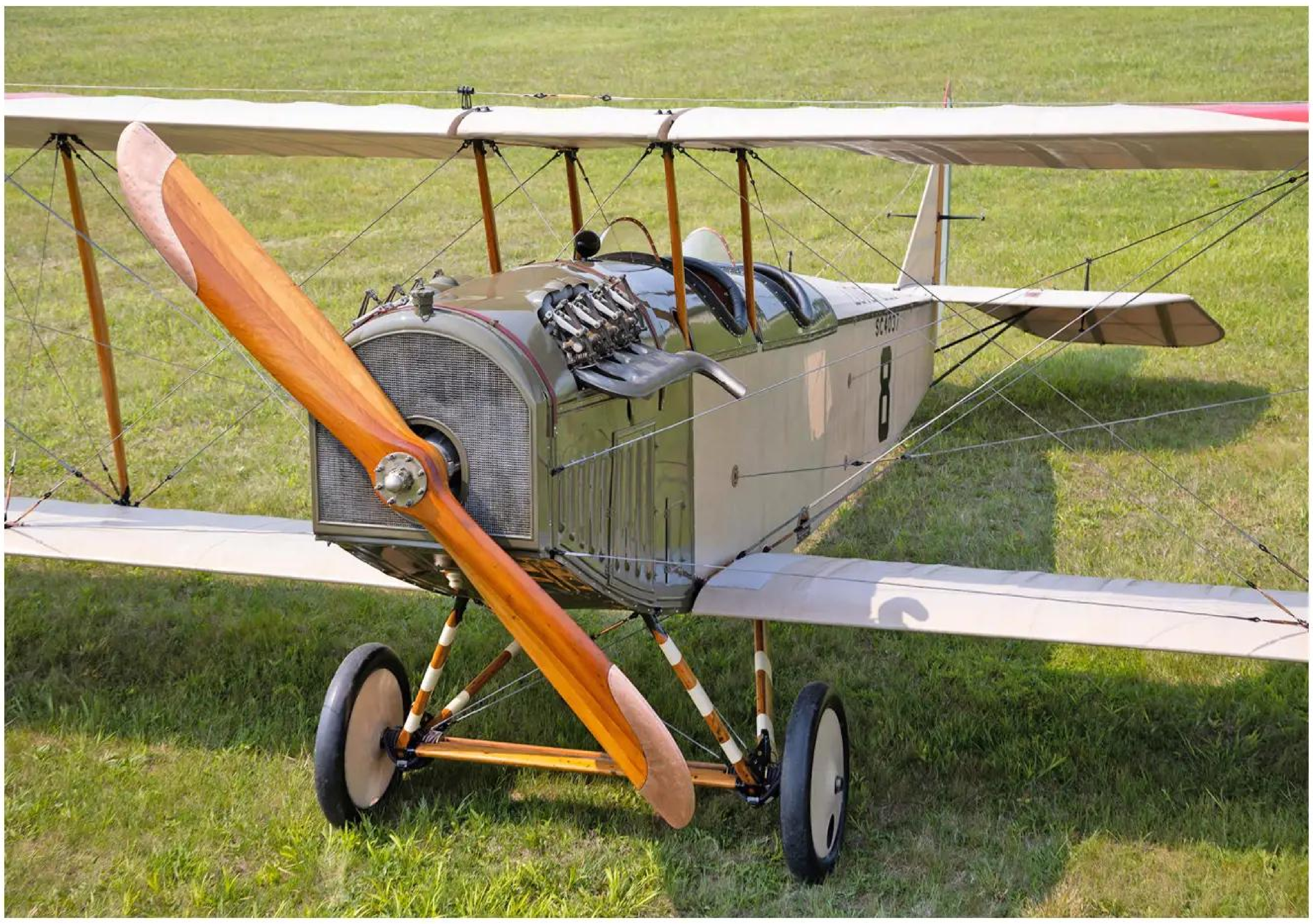


Restored Curtiss JN-4D OX-5 powerplant.



The water-cooled OX-5 installed in the restoration.

Rich Field is now the site of the Richfield High School and the base's original flag pole was erected at the school during 1969.



Completed Jenny in the grass by the museum.

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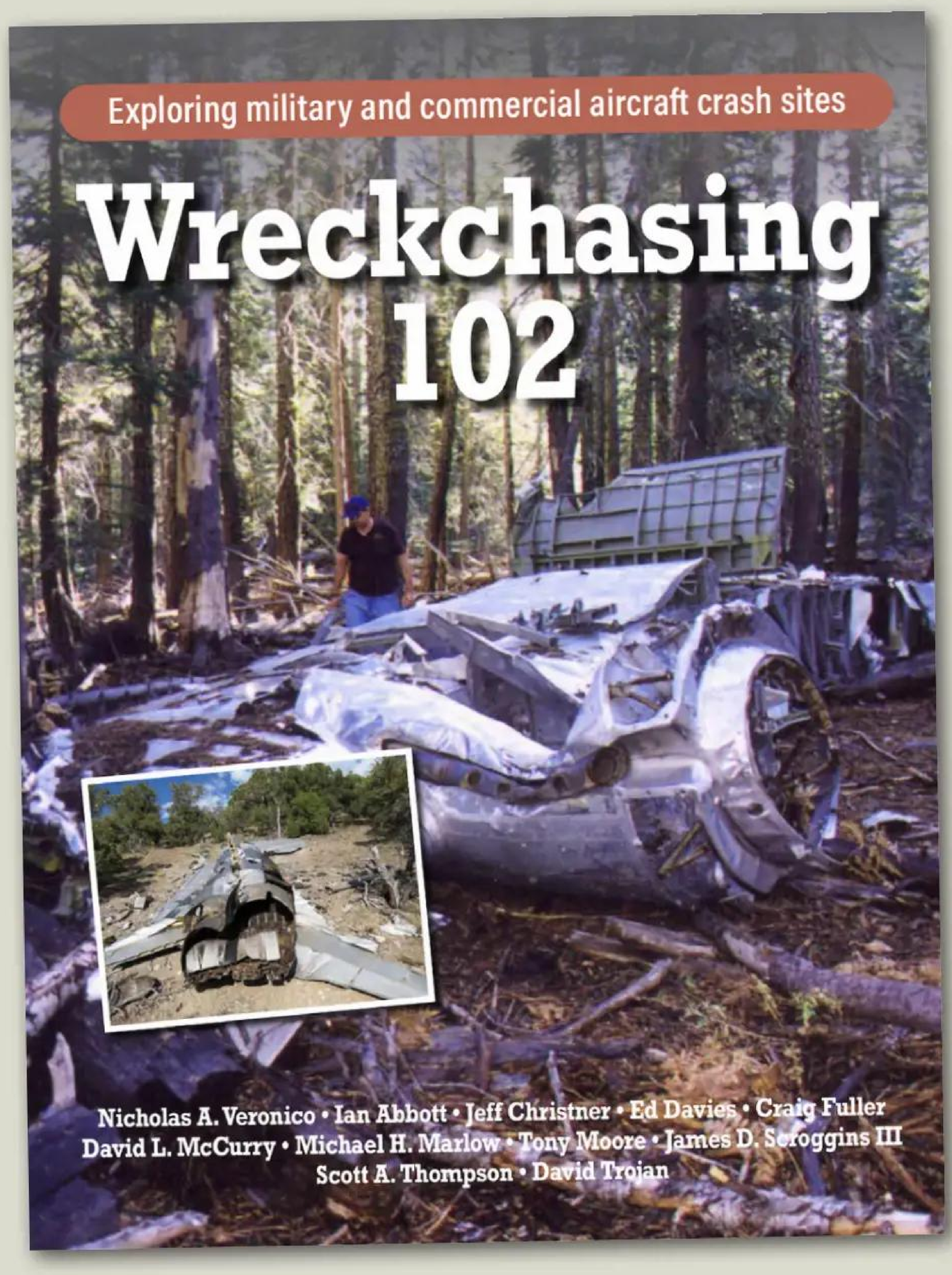
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STUKA RE-BIRTH

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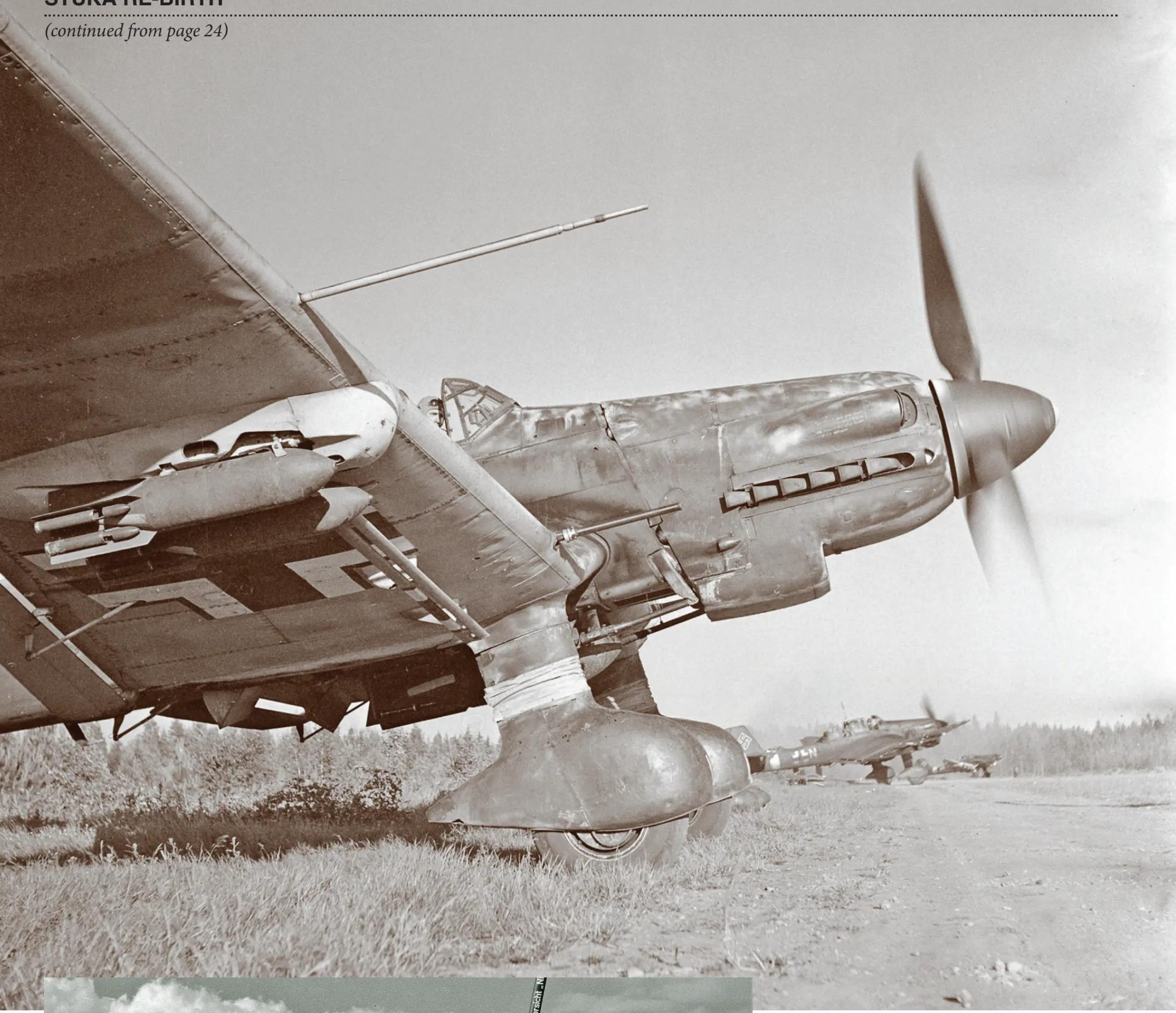

Jumos ticking over, Ju 87D-5s S7+LL (foreground) and S7+NL prepare to depart Immola on 2 July 1944. This photo shows excellent detail of the underwing bombs, long-barrel wing gun, and centerline bomb on its "swing."

Stuka **crews of** ***I./SG 3*** **worked in close conjunction in finding and attacking Russian targets. This D-5 is coded S7+AH.**

that the crew of the *Stuka* became lost and short on fuel while over what seemed to be an endless plain of white snow. Spotting a large frozen lake (which turned out to be near Kemijarvi in Finland), Ernest lined the *Stuka* up for a shallow approach while Zenker kept scanning the sky and swiveling his 7.92mm MG81 twin-barrel machine gun against possible marauding Soviet fighters.

On short approach to the lake, Ernest reached down and pulled a lever that blew off the landing gear legs. This would allow him to gently put the plane down without fear of the fixed gear digging in and flicking the *Stuka* on

Hurry up and wait. *Stuka* crews from *I./SG 3* find that bombs made excellent stools while they awaiting takeoff orders. The Ju 87D-5s were often pushed into the trees surrounding the airfield for camouflage.

its back with probably fatal results. As the dive-bomber settled, the big wooden paddle blade propeller began kicking up chunks of ice along with pieces of broken blades as the craft rapidly deaccelerated. As soon as it came to a stop, the men were out of the cockpit and ran a safe distance away in case it caught fire.

Once they determined the plane was safe, they returned to their cockpits and pulled out emergency supplies along with maps and charts. Ernest detached an R-4 *Sprengladung* ("Destruction Charge") from the mount near the pilot's seat and then walked a short distance away before activating the explosive and tossing it back into the cockpit. The R-4 had a high content of magnesium to guarantee a very hot fire and as soon as the blaze took hold, they walked away and began looking for friendly forces. They were eventually found and returned to their base at Immola.

The *Stuka* was just another casualty of war. It was forgotten by the Germans and once the weather began to warm, the ice started breaking apart and the Ju 87D-5 slipped into the fresh

Gerät-Nr. 8-4184A
Werk-Nr. 4629
0,32 atü
160
34 kg

Made from new drawings and using the original part as a pattern, this is a spar web part for the wing center section made out of 7075 material.

Mass flight of *I./SG 3* Ju 87D-5s turns into the wind for takeoff on a mission to support fighting on the Karelia Front on 28 June 1944.

Pilot of Ju 87D-5 S7+LN inspects the horizontal. This photo shows the crude application of the white snow camouflage.

water lake and sank to the bottom.

During the late 1990s, the new capitalists of the former Soviet Union along with those in more progressive nations formed a cottage industry of finding and recovering downed WWII aircraft. They discovered "those crazy Westerners" would pay solid money for corroding aluminum. If said aluminum still had flakes of original paint, then all the better because the Westerners would pay even more. Over the years, we have done articles on some of these remarkable recoveries but certainly one of the most exciting is that of the Ju 87D-5. For many reasons, the recovery was shrouded in secrecy and once the plane was pulled out of the lake in 2021, it moved between several countries.

In 2023, Rob Collings of the AHM learned about the *Stuka* and he was soon on an airliner to view the aircraft. A deal was struck and the dive-bomber became the property of the AHM. By this time, the *Stuka* being restored by the late Paul Allen had been revealed to the aviation world. With Allen's unexpected death, the project (which had made amazing progress) came to a halt while his sister shopped the collection to possible buyers.

Rob had been surprised by the condition of the D-5. The aluminum skin had been anodized and this had prevented further damage while in the lake. The main — and most obvious damage — was to the center section where the explosive device had been detonated. Also, the jettisoned landing gear was never discovered. Otherwise, all the original equipment was still in the plane along with the dive recovery mechanism.

One of the main problems facing *Stuka* restorers is the lack of a complete set of drawings. The war destroyed many original blueprints. Virtually all the surviving examples had gathered together at various locations and scrapped for their aluminum. This made parts availability virtually nil. However, Europe is positively loaded with aviation enthusiasts and these dedicated individuals scour just about anywhere there might be such things as WWII drawings, photos, components, engines, etc. You get the idea — these enthusiasts and their searches are now providing a steady stream of unusual items for the numerous German aircraft restorations taking place around the world.

During April, I accompanied Rob on a trip to see the *Stuka* and meet with people involved in the program (the overseer for the restoration is Sweden's Mikael Carlson and I do not think a better choice could have been made). Czech Republic has a long and proud aviation tradition — a tradition nearly destroyed by two of history's deadliest regimes, the Nazis and the communists. Today, that tradition is continuing in many different ways and several Czech companies will be adding their expertise to getting the Ju 87D-5 to fly again. During our whirlwind trip, we attended the one-day Aircraft Parts Exchange at the Technik Museum in Speyer, Germany. This gathering is *Luftwaffe*-centric and we found many rare and wonderful items including Me 110 tires, instruments, and manuals. The real find was a nearly-new Ju 87D landing gear leg. First, gear legs for the *Stuka* are nearly impossible to find and the legs differ between variants so that makes a D leg really rare! Obviously, a deal was quickly transacted and we moved the leg out to our car.

This will be the first in my ongoing reports on bringing the Ju 87D-5 back to life. Join us on our journey into history for we will be learning more not only about restoring the dive-bomber but also about the people that built and flew her. We shall also voyage into the far north to learn of the combat missions during Finland's three distinct phases of the Second World War. It will be an exciting time with many discoveries to come. **AC**

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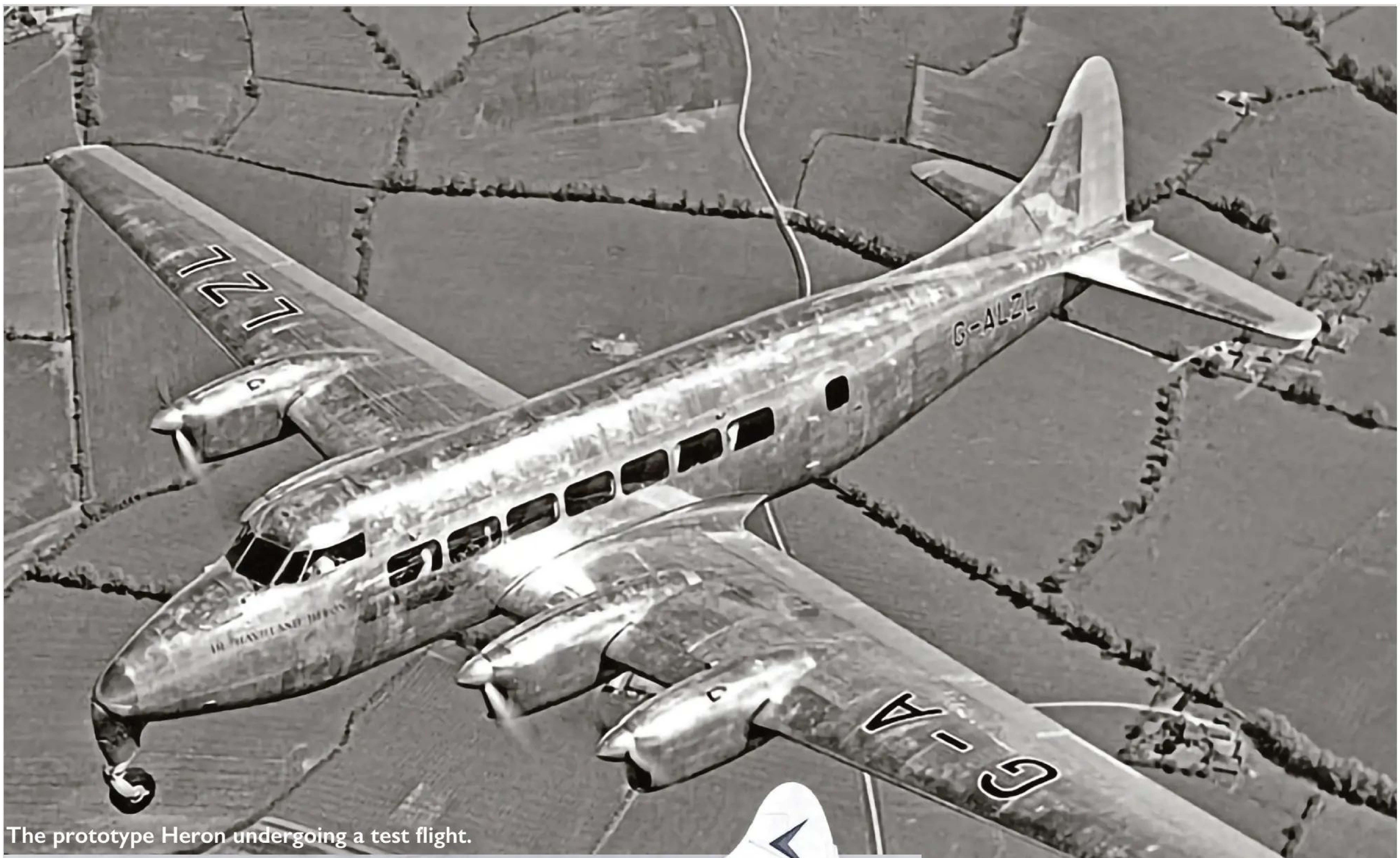
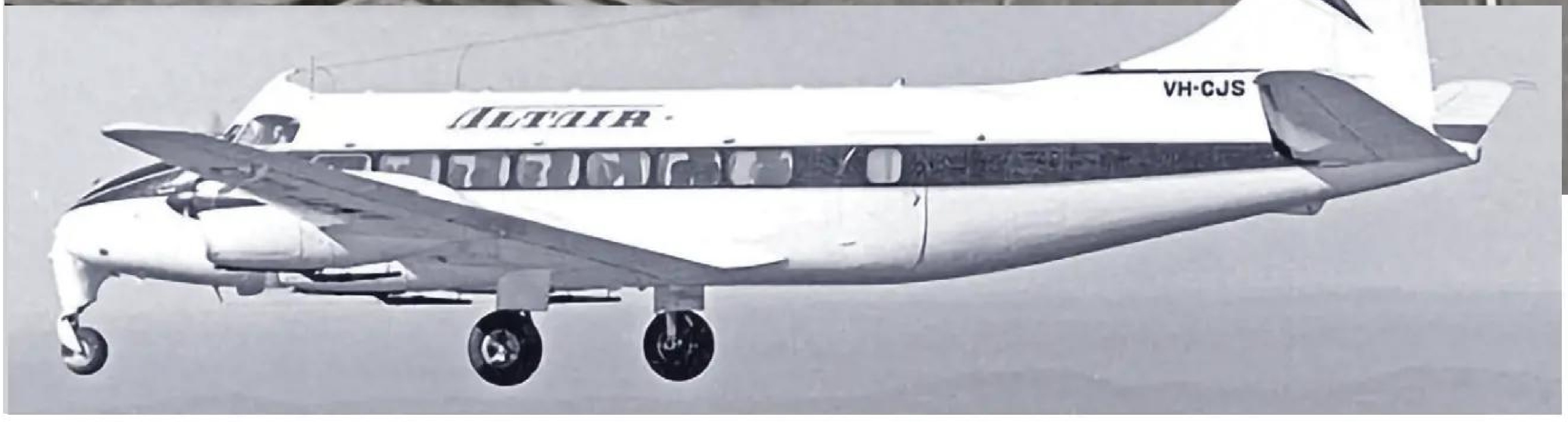
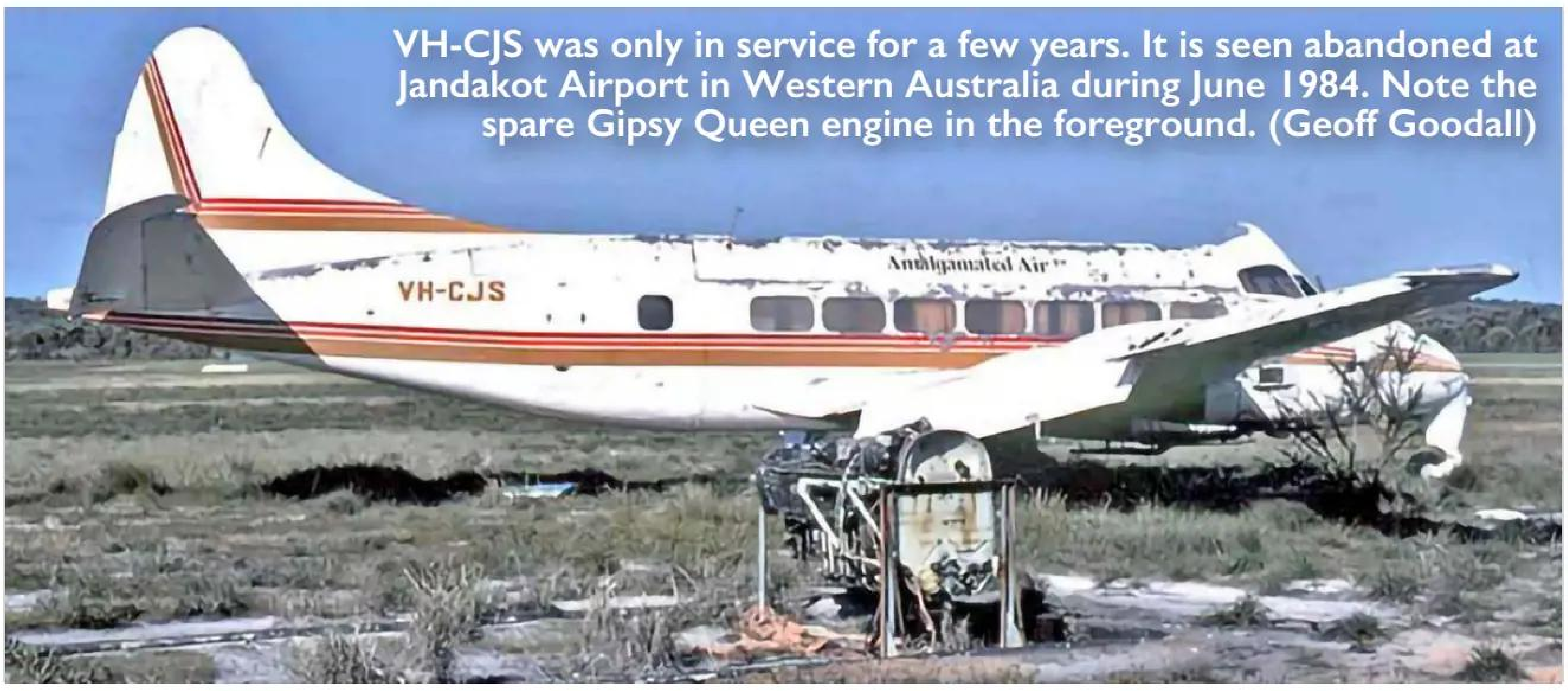


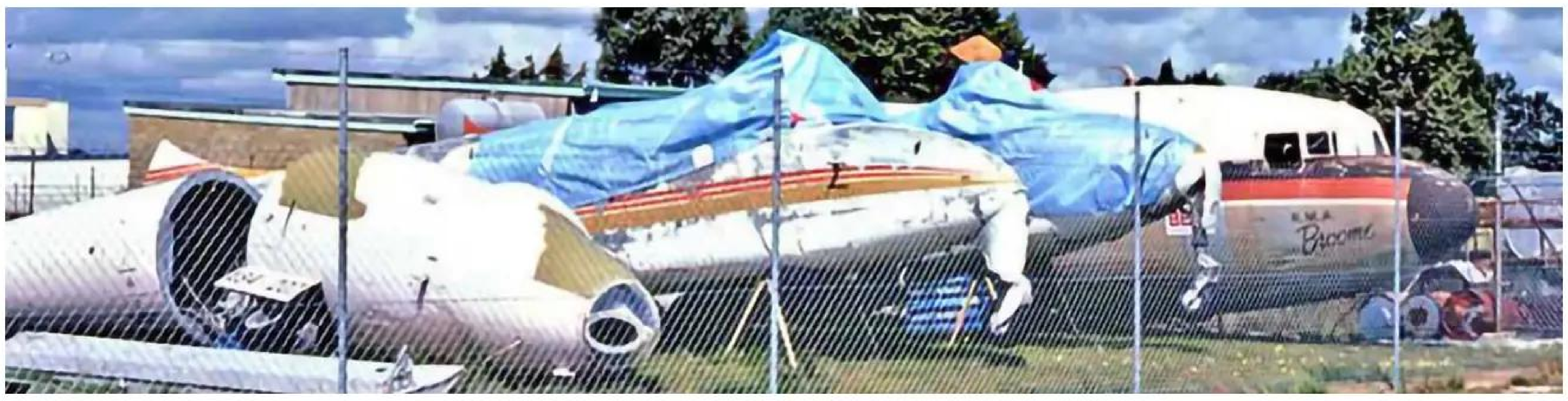
The prototype Heron undergoing a test flight.



The prototype eventually found its way to Australia where it was registered VH-CJS and is seen when it was operated by Altair during September 1973. (Michael Austin)



VH-CJS was only in service for a few years. It is seen abandoned at Jandakot Airport in Western Australia during June 1984. Note the spare Gipsy Queen engine in the foreground. (Geoff Goodall)



The problem of large aircraft preservation is aptly illustrated in this view of the disassembled Heron along with other aircraft at the Western Australia Museum of Aviation during September 1998. (Geoff Goodall)

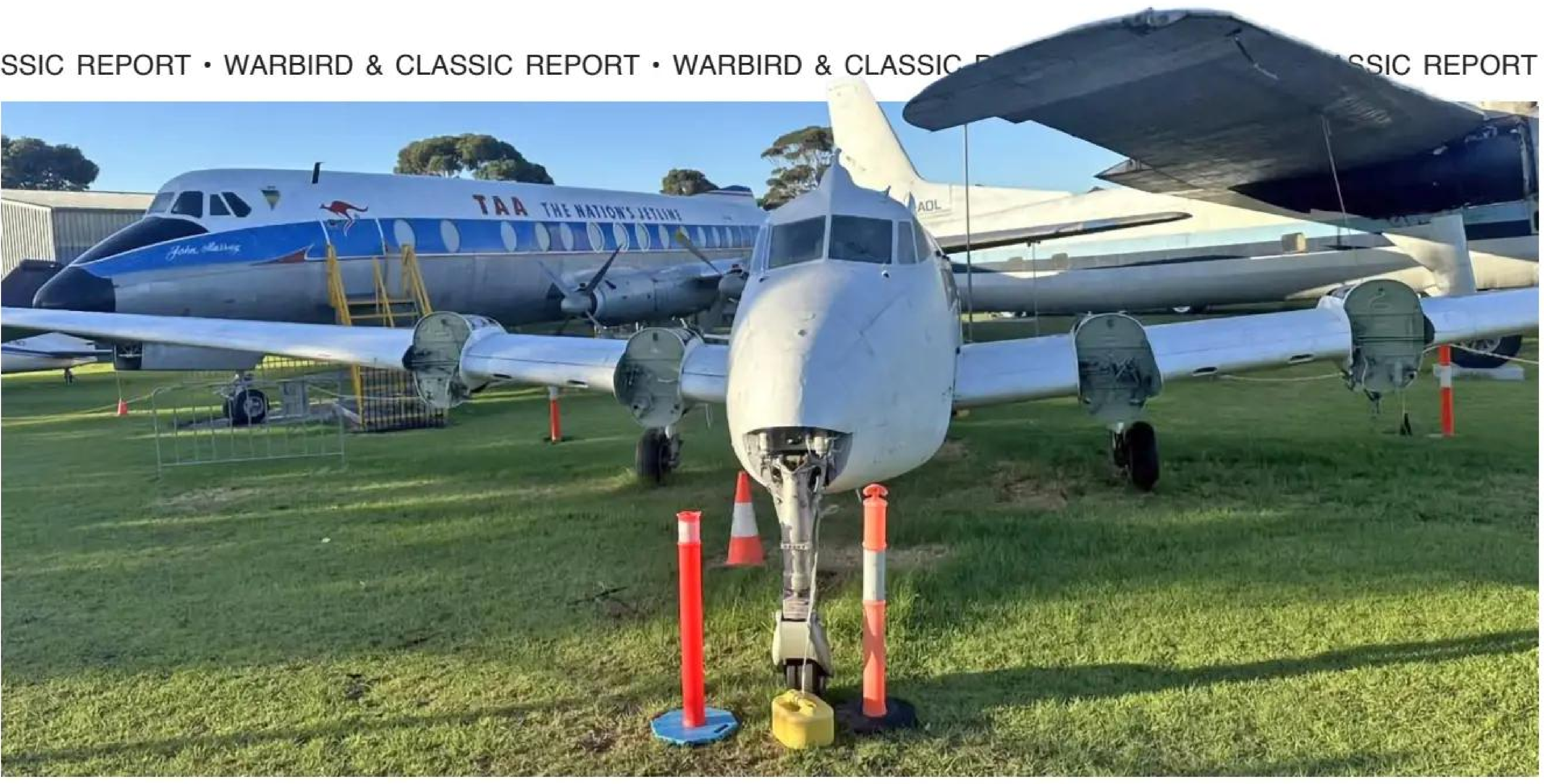
SAVING A HERON

The de Havilland Dove was a success story for post-war British aviation. The elegant twin-engine aircraft was utilized by airlines, businesses, and private flyers and it was followed by the four-engine Heron, which looked a great deal like the Dove. Some 149 Herons were built and over the years the type became subject of numerous modifications in order to modernize the plane and these included the Riley Turbo Skyliner and the Saunders ST-27/ST-28 series.

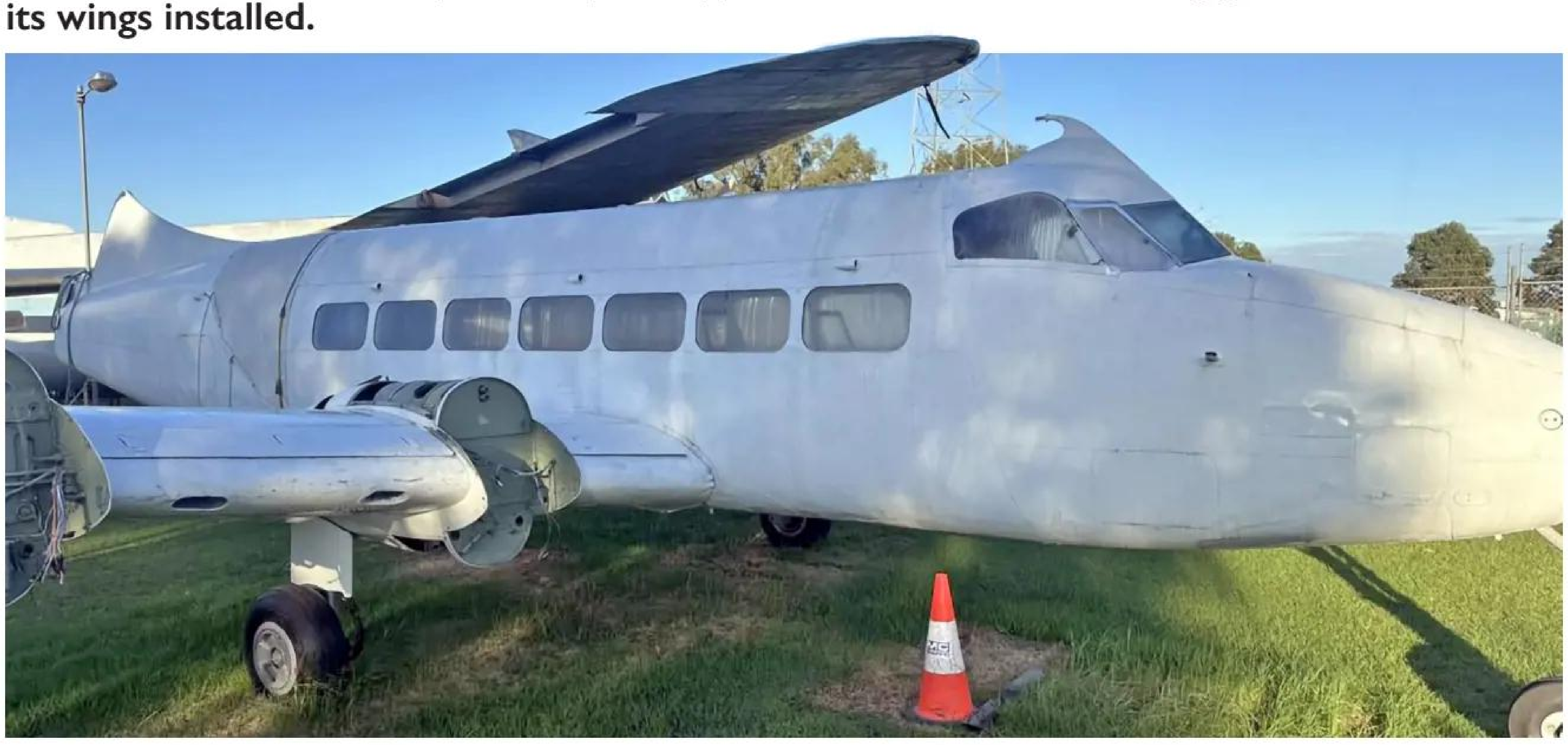
Right from the start, the Heron was underpowered. Its four Gipsy Queen 30 engines (the design dated back to the Great War) were heavy at 490 pounds each and produced only 250-hp. Also, the landing gear was fixed. In an attempt to increase performance, later aircraft had retractable gear and a number of improvements. Carrying 17 passengers, the Heron was often used by small airlines servicing remote areas.

The fact that the prototype has survived is rather amazing. Built as DH.114 Heron Mk. I, the plane used the nose and tail of a Dove jointed to a longer fuselage. Registered as G-ALZL, it made its first flight on 10 May 1950. The aircraft was used for testing and as a sales demonstrator. Over the years, the airliner went through a number of owners and modifications. The aircraft eventually made it to Australia where it was registered VH-CJS on 23 August 1973. It then entered a period of activity on regular and charter flights until it made its last flight on 21 May 1978 (on three engines). It then entered into a legal battle and was stored at several locations until being acquired in 1986 by the Western Australian Museum of Aviation. Not much work was done on the plane and, unsurprisingly, the museum failed. It was then obtained by the Aviation Heritage Museum, which also failed, before going to the International Airliners Museum — another failure (are we seeing a trend?).

In 2013, the prototype became the property of the Australian National Aviation Museum at Moorabbin Airport. The airframe was disassembled and in poor condition and went into outside storage. This institution morphed into the current Moorabbin Air Museum and work on the Heron has been progressing. The plane now has its wings attached and is sitting on its landing gear. However, many challenges remain. As can be seen, work is being done in the open along with some of the museum's other airliners. All the planes are suffering from prolonged exposure and while it is good that work is underway to save this rare prototype, we have to wonder what the future holds.



Work currently underway on the prototype which now has its landing gear attached and its wings installed.



Many parts are missing and the museum states that these are being manufactured using a 3D printer.

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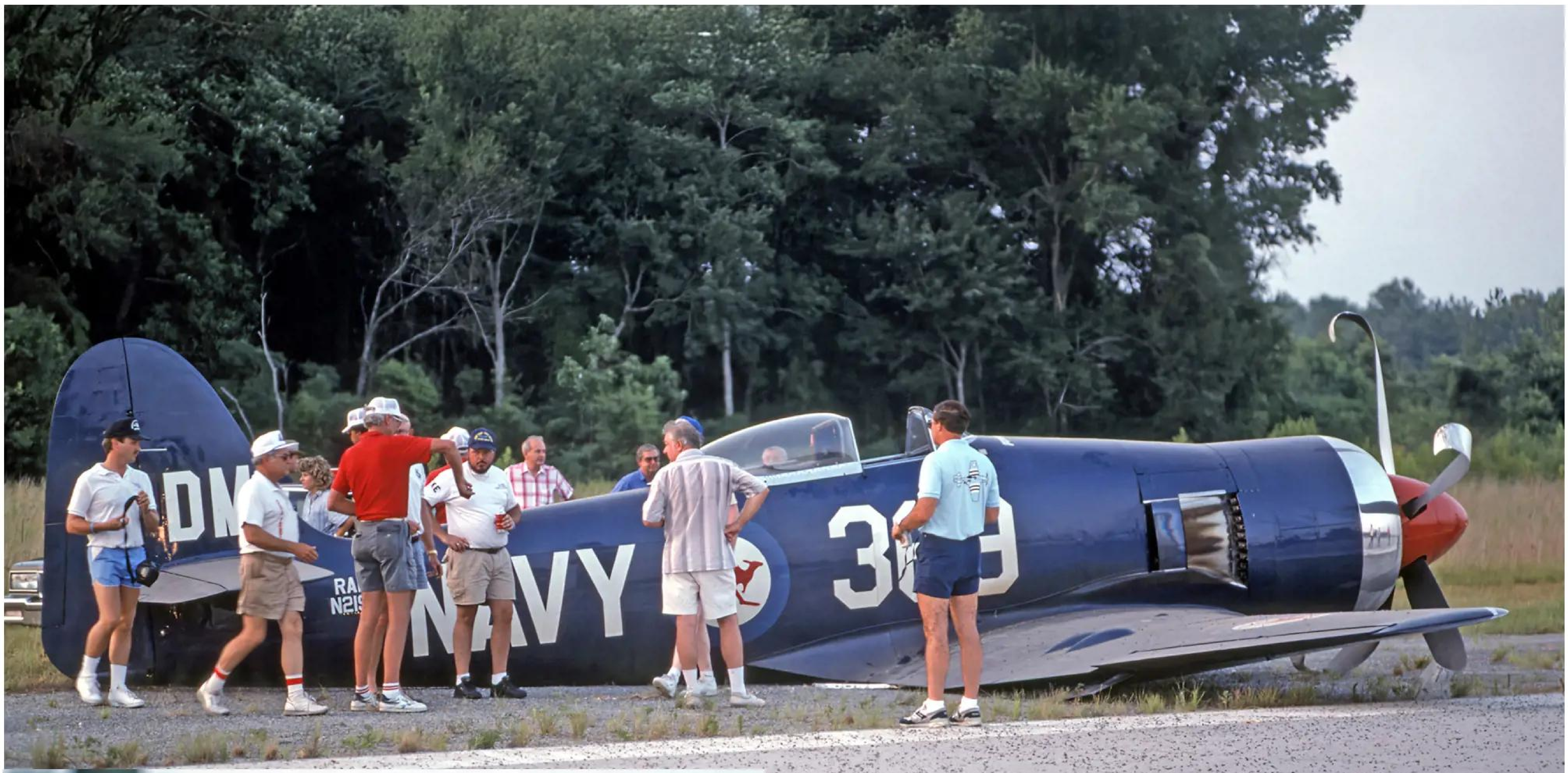

Ronnie Gardner, in red shirt, explaining his various attempts on getting the gear down.

TROY FLY IN
FIFTH ANNUAL

Ronnie sitting on the wing of the stricken Sea Fury, talking to fellow Warbird pilots.

Ronnie and Chuck after a flight in the Cavanaugh Skyraider.

RONNIE GARDNER

One of the original "old guard" Warbird pilots is no longer with us. Ronnie Gardner passed away on 2 May, leaving hundreds of pilots that he had enriched by his teachings over the years. While in college, Ronnie developed a love for aviation and soon took up the sport of skydiving. By the time he hung up his skydiving parachute, he had made 328 jumps. Ronnie was a captain with several airlines and he joined the then-Confederate Air Force in 1970 and went on to fly almost every Warbird in their inventory. Regular *Air Classics* contributor Chuck Gardner recalled Uncle Ronnie: "He had an impressive 65 type ratings on his Pilot Certificate and was also an FAA Designee, Specialty Aircraft Examiner, and provided check-rides for type ratings on Warbirds. Ronnie was very generous and taught many people how to fly. He is survived by his wife Ruby and they were married for 44 years. As for me, I grew up watching Uncle Ronnie fly for the CAF, Lone Star Flight Museum, Cavanaugh Flight Museum, and many other collectors at airshows around the country. Ronnie helped with some of my own type ratings and accomplishments. He was a good, strong man and a lifelong mentor to me."

Michael O'Leary recalls, "Over the years I had a chance to fly with Ronnie in a wide number of aircraft. My strongest memory is of a hot and humid afternoon at Troy, Alabama. Over the airport, a pilot was putting on a very spirited airshow in a blue Hawker Sea Fury. I commented on the fact to the owner of the plane who was standing next to me. 'Yes and no,' he said. 'Ronnie can't get the gear down.' So, for about the next 30 minutes we watched a superb display as he did everything possible to get the gear to extend while also burning off fuel. Once the fuel supply was pretty well exhausted, he put down the flaps and approached the runway. He held the nose up for as long as possible but that big polished five-blade prop finally started digging into the runway. Ronnie kept it straight before torque pulled the plane off the runway. As the dust settled, I ran up to the plane and there was Ronnie, casually sitting on the wing explaining what he had done and why he had done it. He will be missed."

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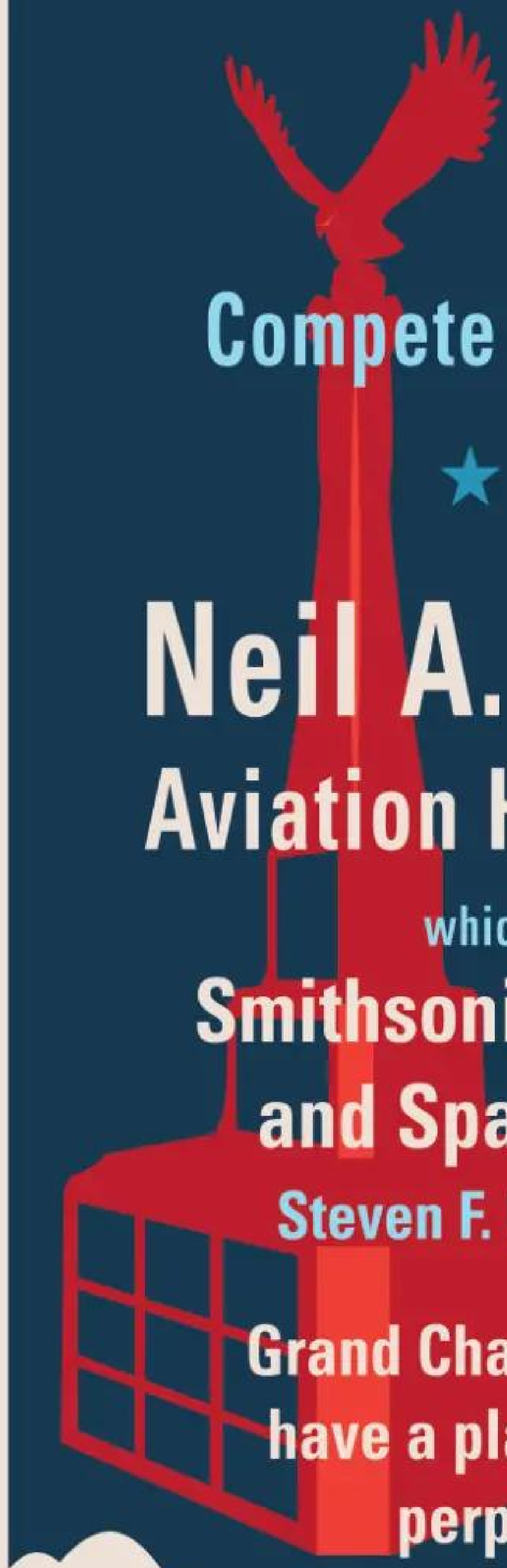

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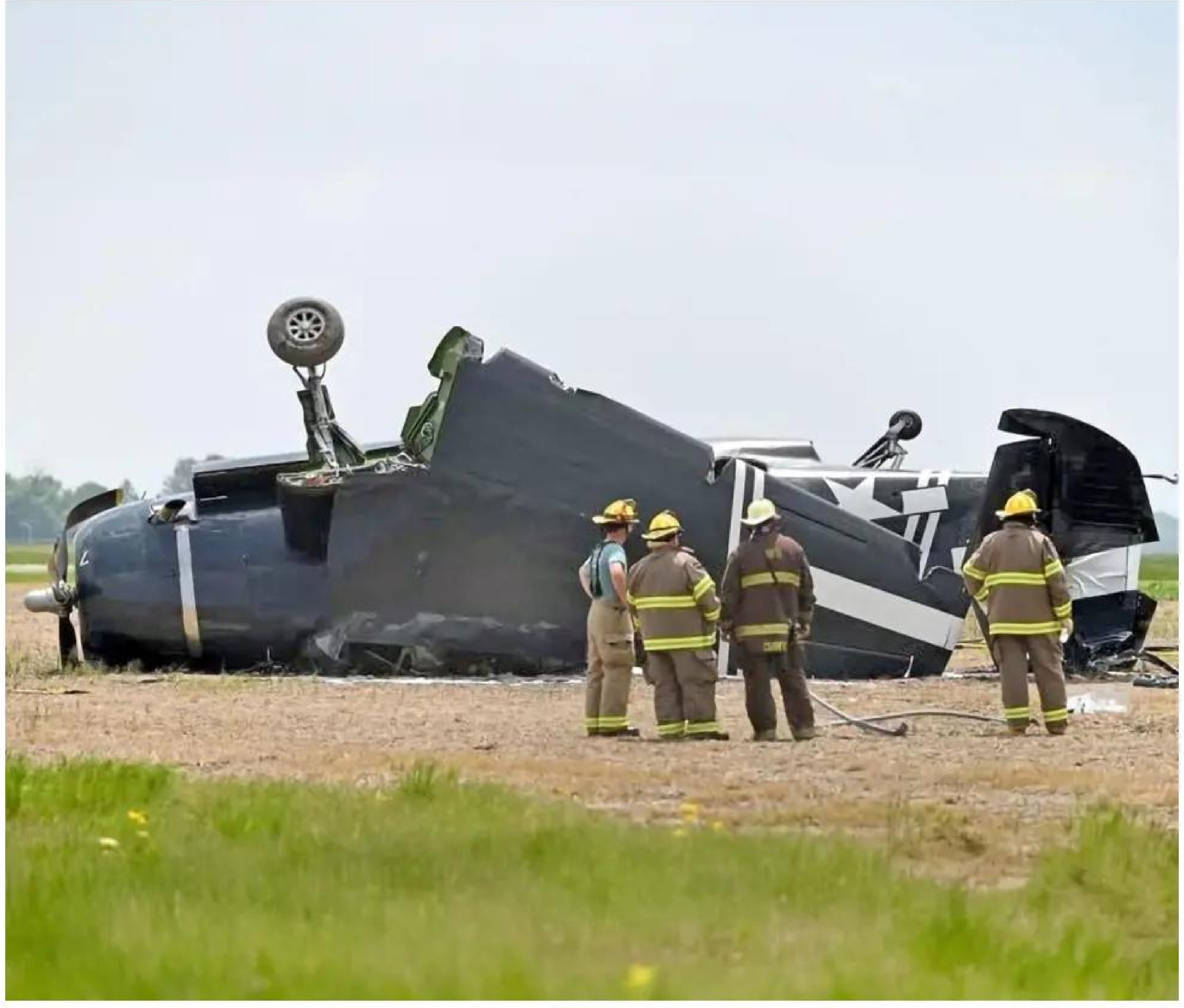
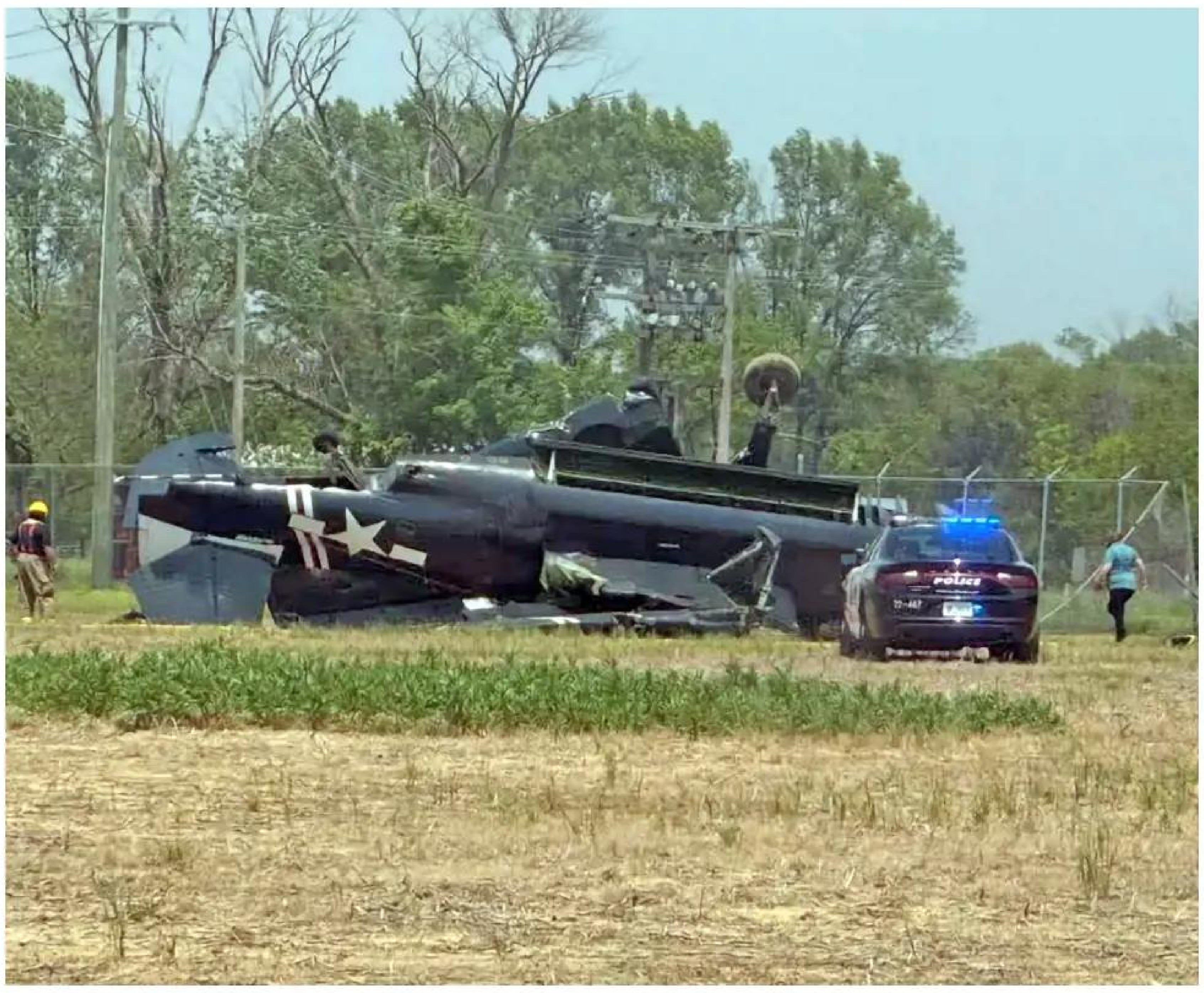

The aircraft shortly after coming to rest inverted at Terra Haute.


It appears both outer wing panels were detached from the center section.

AVENGER DOWN

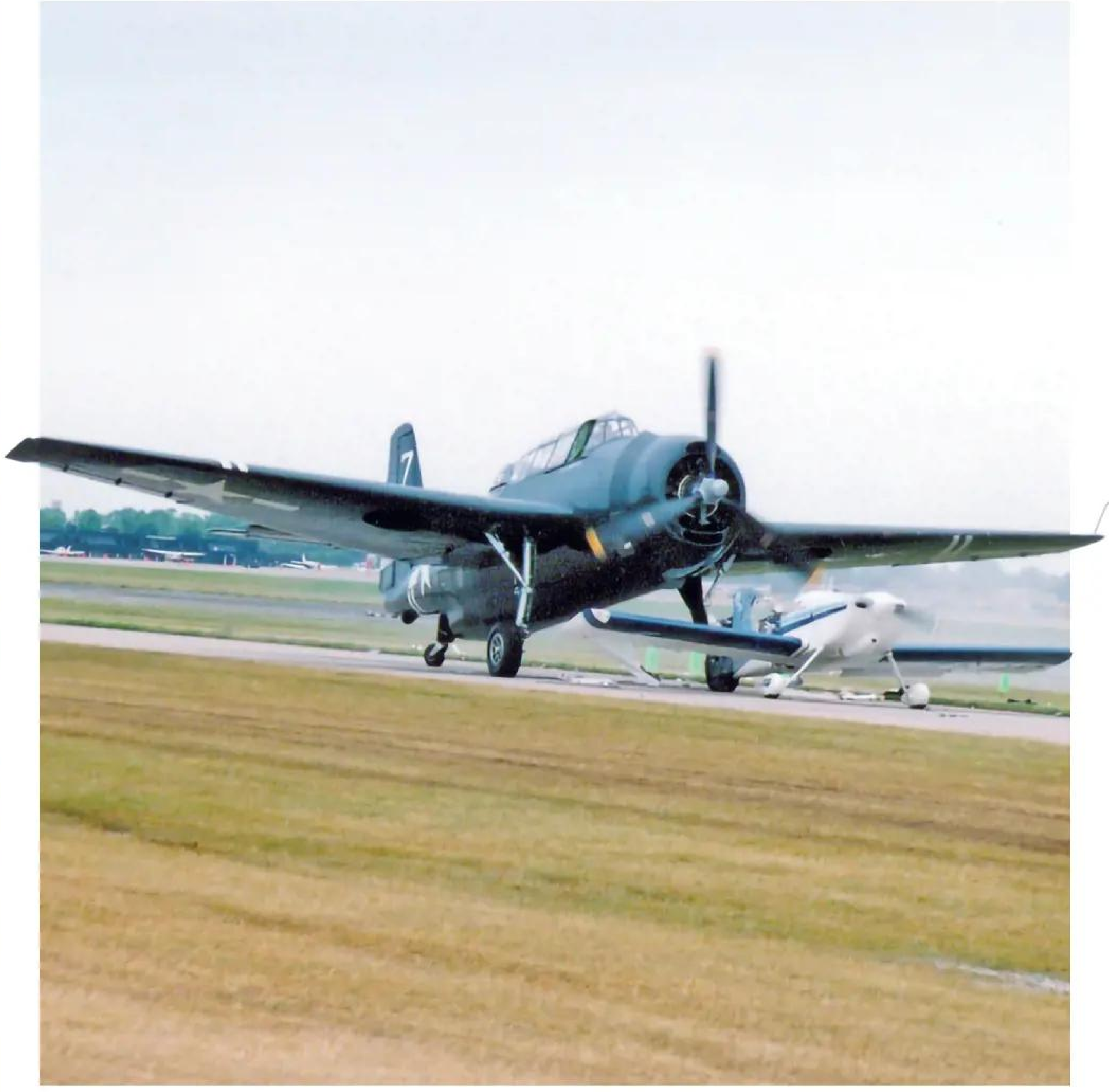
On 15 May, Grumman TBM-3 Avenger N420GP BuNo 53420 crash-landed on the property of the Terre Haute Regional Airport in Indiana. The Avenger was owned by the Tri-State Warbird Museum and was part of a formation of three aircraft flying from the Cincinnati area to pick up other aircraft and then head to the Avenger Reunion at Peru, Indiana. The first aircraft to land was a Grumman HU-16 Albatross and it landed safely and cleared the runway. The second plane was the accident Avenger and it landed short, breeched the airport perimeter fence, and then flipped over. The third aircraft was a T-6 Texan and it was diverted to land at Sullivan Country Airport. The airport rescue team responded rapidly and found that the passenger had already exited the aircraft but the pilot was trapped in the inverted torpedo-bomber. Foam was immediately deployed and the pilot was extracted with injuries while the master switch was turned off. Observers state that it appeared the R-2600 engine lost power while on short final.

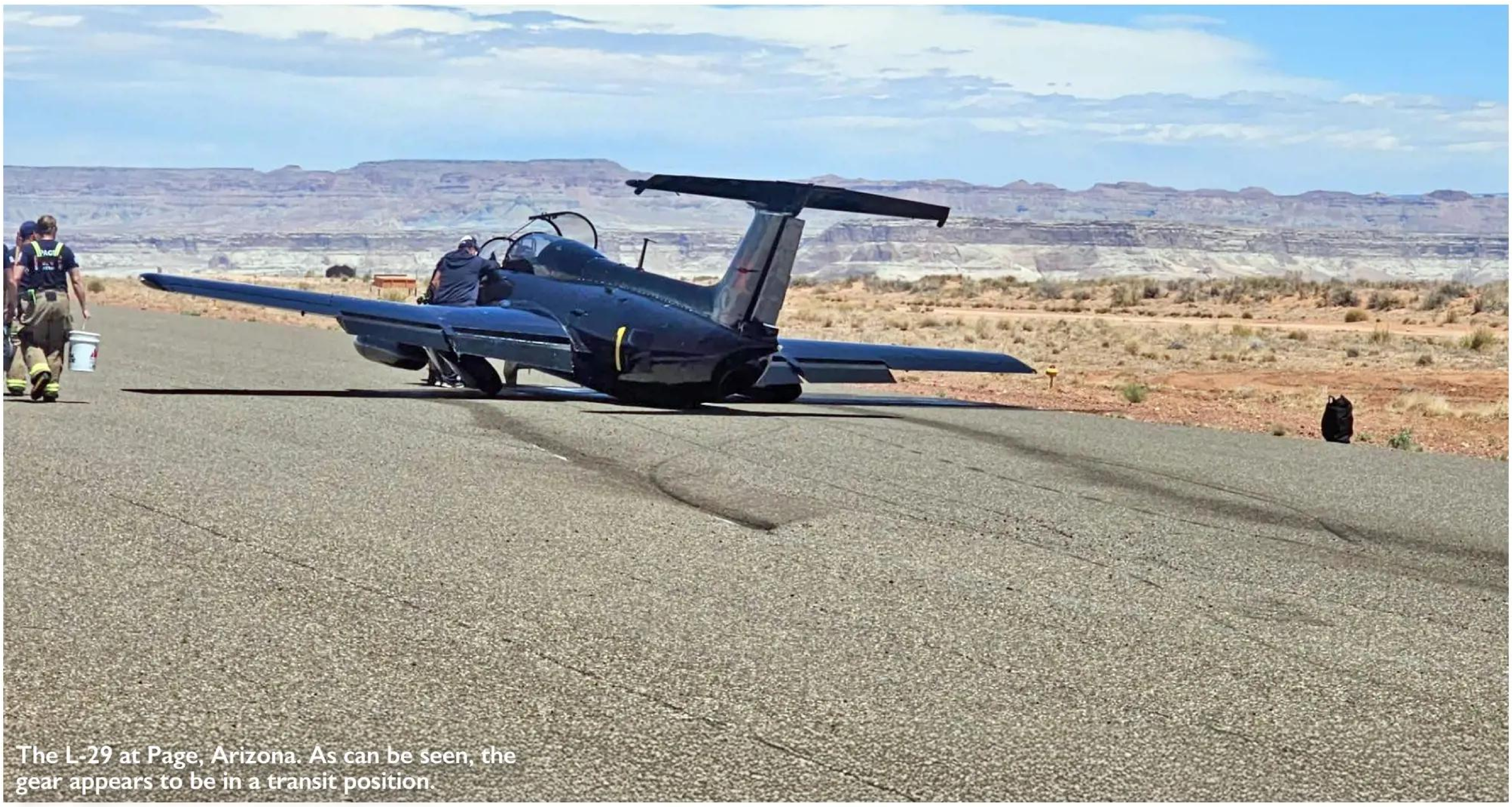
The aircraft has an interesting history. It flew combat missions with VT-36 from USS *Siboney* (CVE-112) during WWII and in 1950 it was transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy where it was converted to an Avenger AS.3 by Fairey Aviation of Canada and flew for two years with 881 Squadron. In late 1954, it returned to Fairey for conversion to an Avenger AS.3M and would go on to serve with VS-880, VX-10, and VU-32. On 27 April 1958, it taxied into a wooden airfield hut when the pilot did not S-turn. In 1960, it was sold surplus and converted to fire-bomber CF-KCM Tanker 616. On 8 June 1981, the plane was extensively damaged when the engine lost power during the takeoff roll. It then went into storage and began to go through various civilian owners as N420GP, being acquired by Tri-State in 2004.

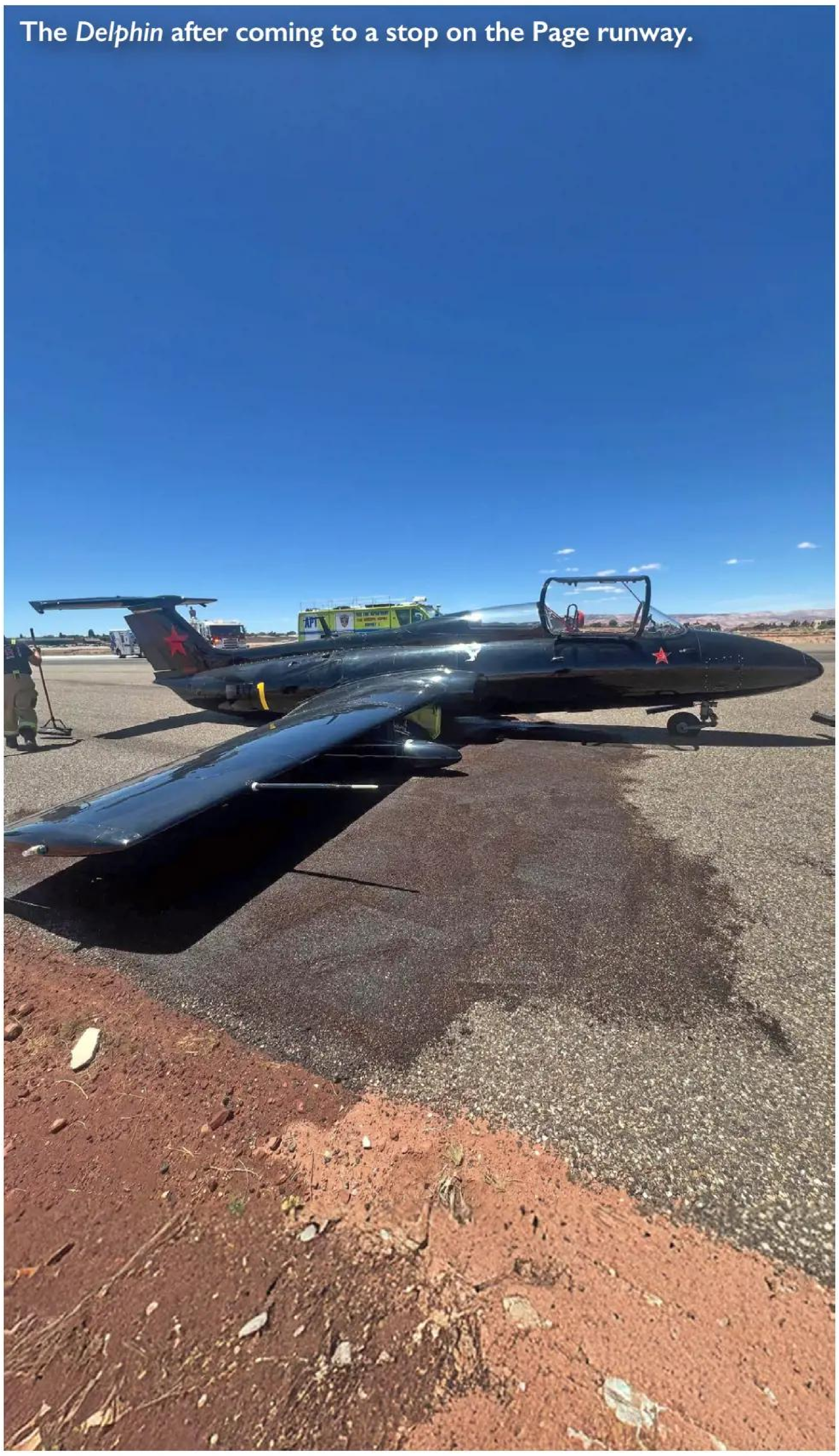
This Avenger was also part of a tragic accident that took place at AirVenture 2006. On 30 July, the TBM taxied into a Vans RV-6, killing the occupant of the homebuilt. The NTSB investigation stated the Avenger pilot failed to maintain clearance from the RV-6 and that his visual lookout was inadequate.

Given the value of an Avenger and the overall damage to airframe/engine, the aircraft is probably not a monetarily feasible restoration.

16
CF-KCM
616
Conair
The TBM-3 operating as Tanker 616.


The Avenger taxiing into the RV homebuilt. Some witnesses stated that the pilot of the TBM never S-turned the plane.


The L-29 at Page, Arizona. As can be seen, the gear appears to be in a transit position.


The *Delphin* after coming to a stop on the Page runway.

L-29 GEAR-UPS

On 16 May, Aerovodochody L-29 N65BR made what appears to be a partial gear-up landing at Page, Arizona. It is not clear if the plane came in gear-up or if the gear began to retract after touchdown. The aircraft suffered minimal damage and there were no injuries. On 21 April, L-29 N154MM suffered either a gear-up landing or partial gear retraction at Tehachapi, California. Once again, damage was minimal and there were no injuries.

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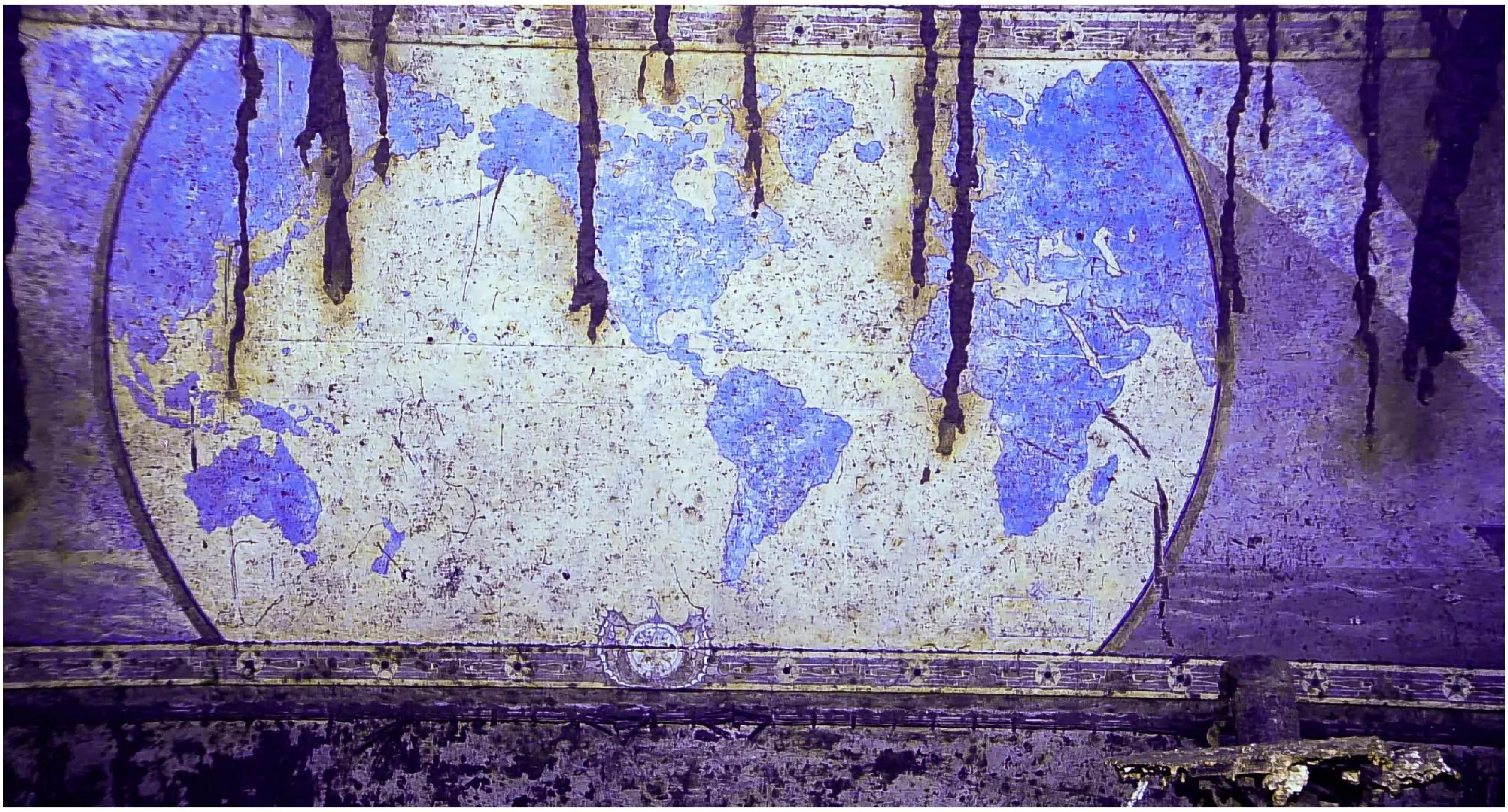
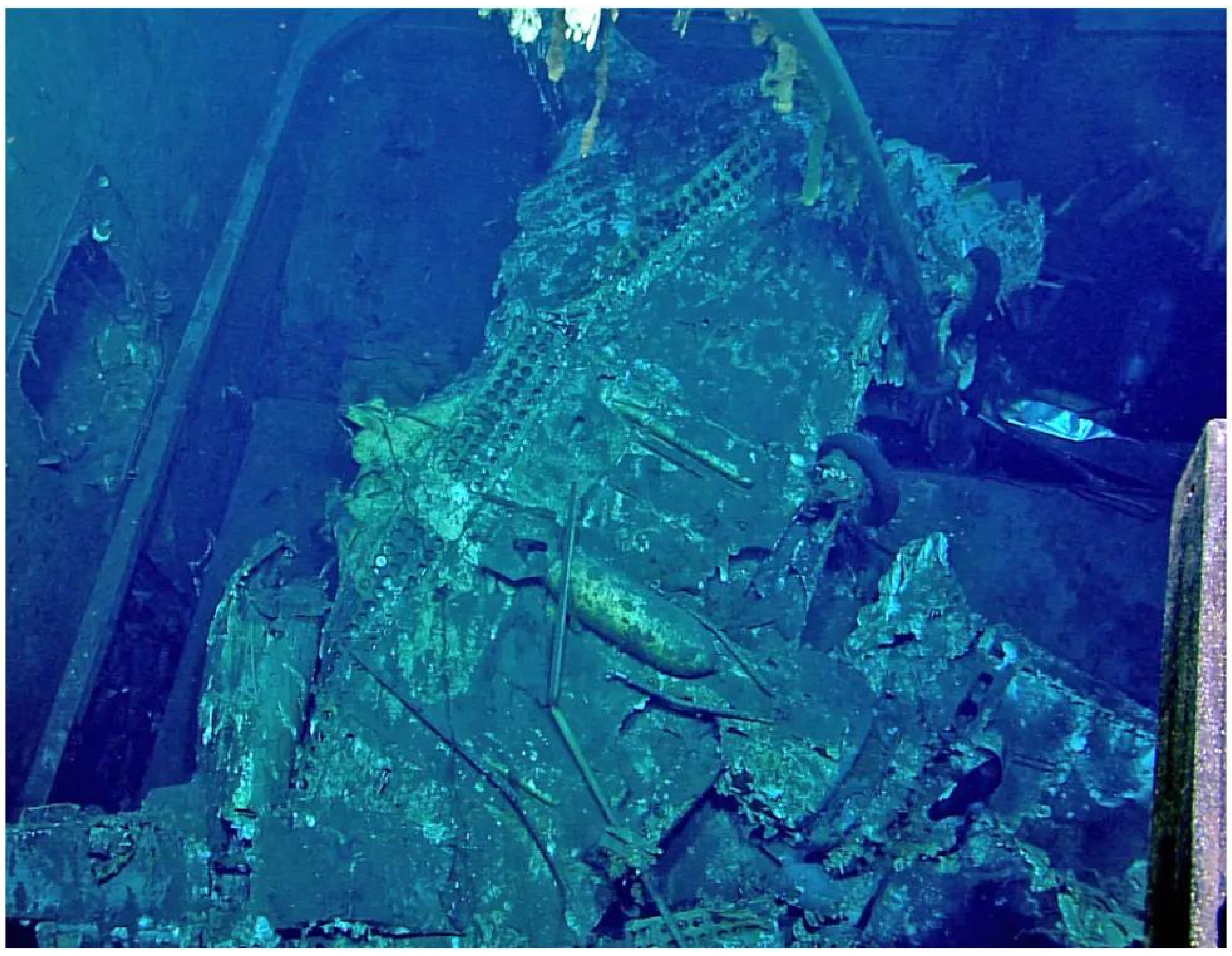


At over 40 feet long, the mural aboard the carrier is in remarkable condition.

Looking down on one of the damaged SBDs.



A bomb still in its cradle on an SBD.

DAUNTLESS WITH BOMB

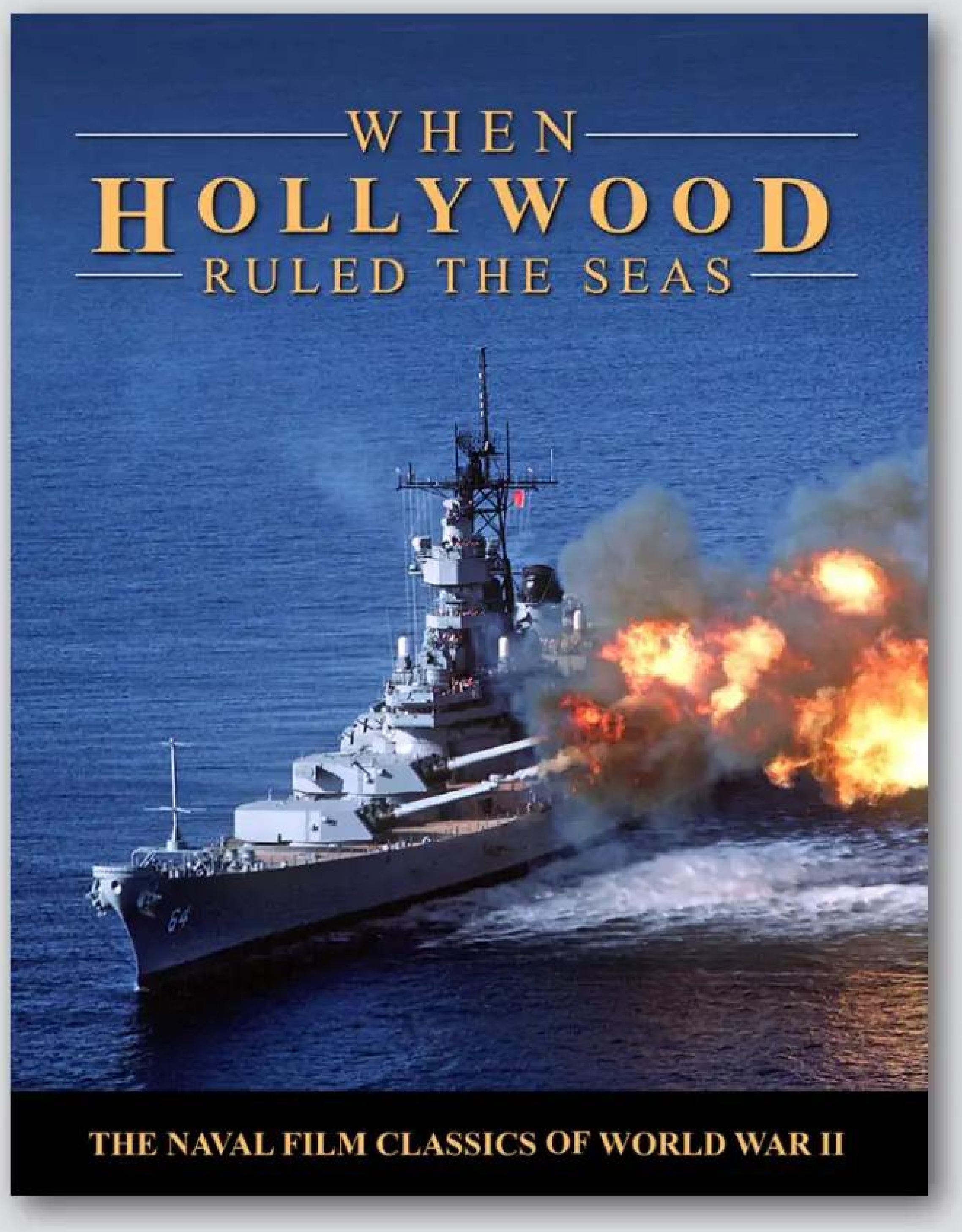
NOAA Ocean Exploration has announced the discovery of a fully-armed Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless with an 83-year-old bomb still attached to a wing. The aircraft was trapped inside the USS *Yorktown* when it was sunk by a Japanese submarine after the 1942 Battle of Midway. Discovered on 20 April, the plane is one of three bombers found piled on each other in the famed carrier's hangar deck. Historians have stated that the discovery is "game-changing." During the pivotal battle, nearly 150 aircraft were lost and none have been located until now.

One naval historian stated following the discover: "The significance of this can't be overstated. This is a combat veteran SBD from the Battle of Midway. These are the planes that won that battle. Not just that, but for a twist of fate, a bomb could have been dropped on a Japanese ship. This is an absolutely historic moment in underwater exploration. We've always wanted to find aircraft associated with the Battle of Midway and here it is."

The *Yorktown* went down about 1000 miles northwest of Honolulu and was rediscovered by a US Navy and National Geographic expedition in 1998. The wreck site was documented by Ocean Exploration Trust in 2023 but cameras were not sent inside. NOAA Ocean Exploration took that risk over the Easter holiday weekend and the three aircraft were located in the carrier's #3 elevator shaft.

NOAA stated that the fully-armed Dauntless was found upside down and was part of *Yorktown's* reserve force on the first morning of the battle. The other two planes have a more unique history. "Another plane, with the figures 'B5' boldly legible on its fuselage, is currently believed to be BuNo 4581, an SBD-3 assigned to Bombing Squadron Six aboard the USS *Enterprise*. Records show that in the chaos of battle, *Yorktown* recovered two *Enterprise* aircraft that had been badly damaged in an attack on the Imperial Japanese Navy carrier *Kaga*. These aircraft were moved down to the hangar deck and later set afire by one of the enemy bombs that struck the *Yorktown*. A vintage car (a 1940/41 Ford Super Deluxe woody station wagon with the partial wording "SHIP SERVICE — NAVY" on the front plate was also found along with a large mural depicting the carrier's historic voyages (titled *A Chart of the Cruises of the USS Yorktown*, the mural measures 42 by 12 feet and is remarkably well-preserved.

NOAA also stated that the *Yorktown's* wreckage is a protected site by the Naval History and Heritage Command and "serves as the final resting place for hundreds of servicemen that gave their lives in defense of the nation." **AC**



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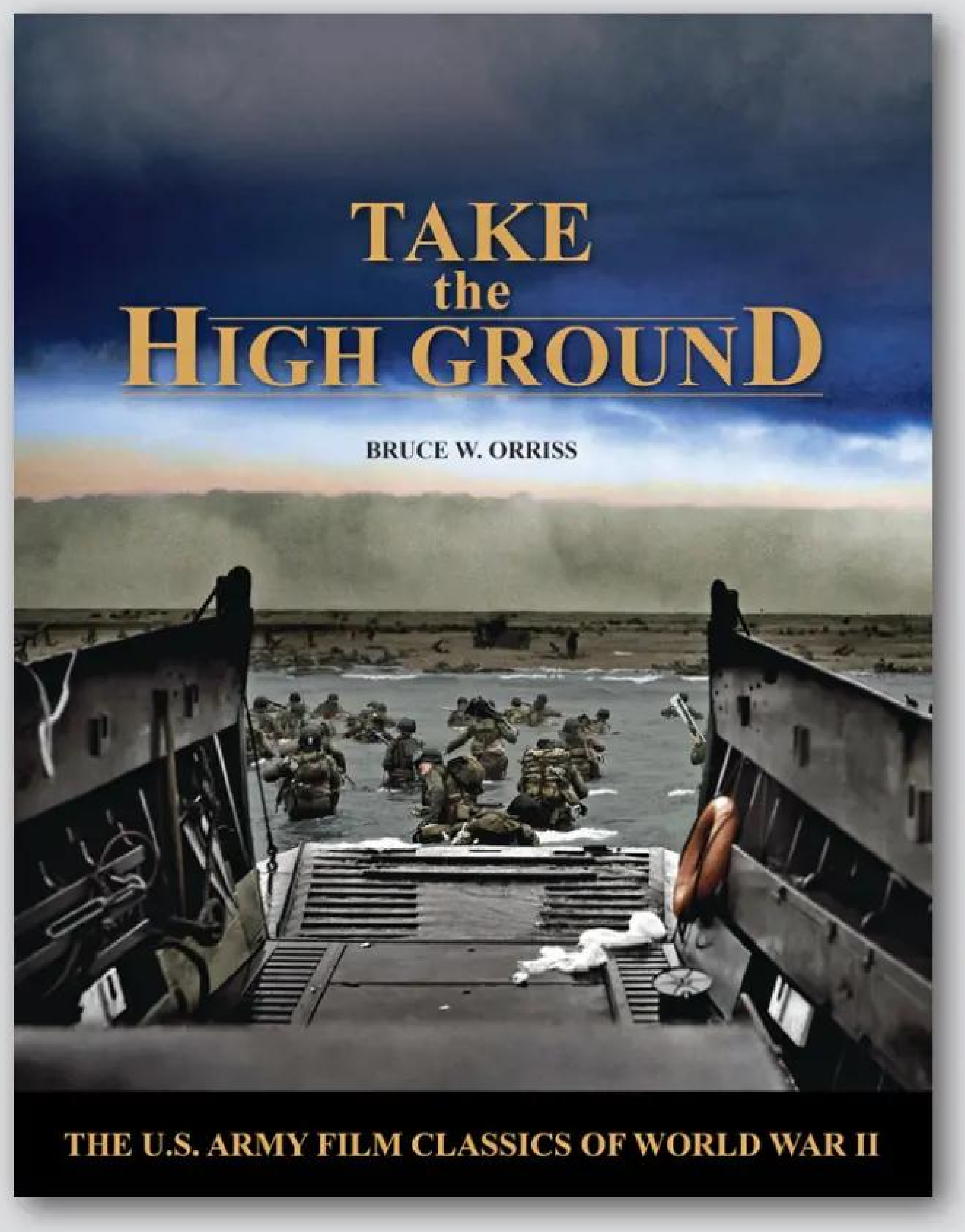

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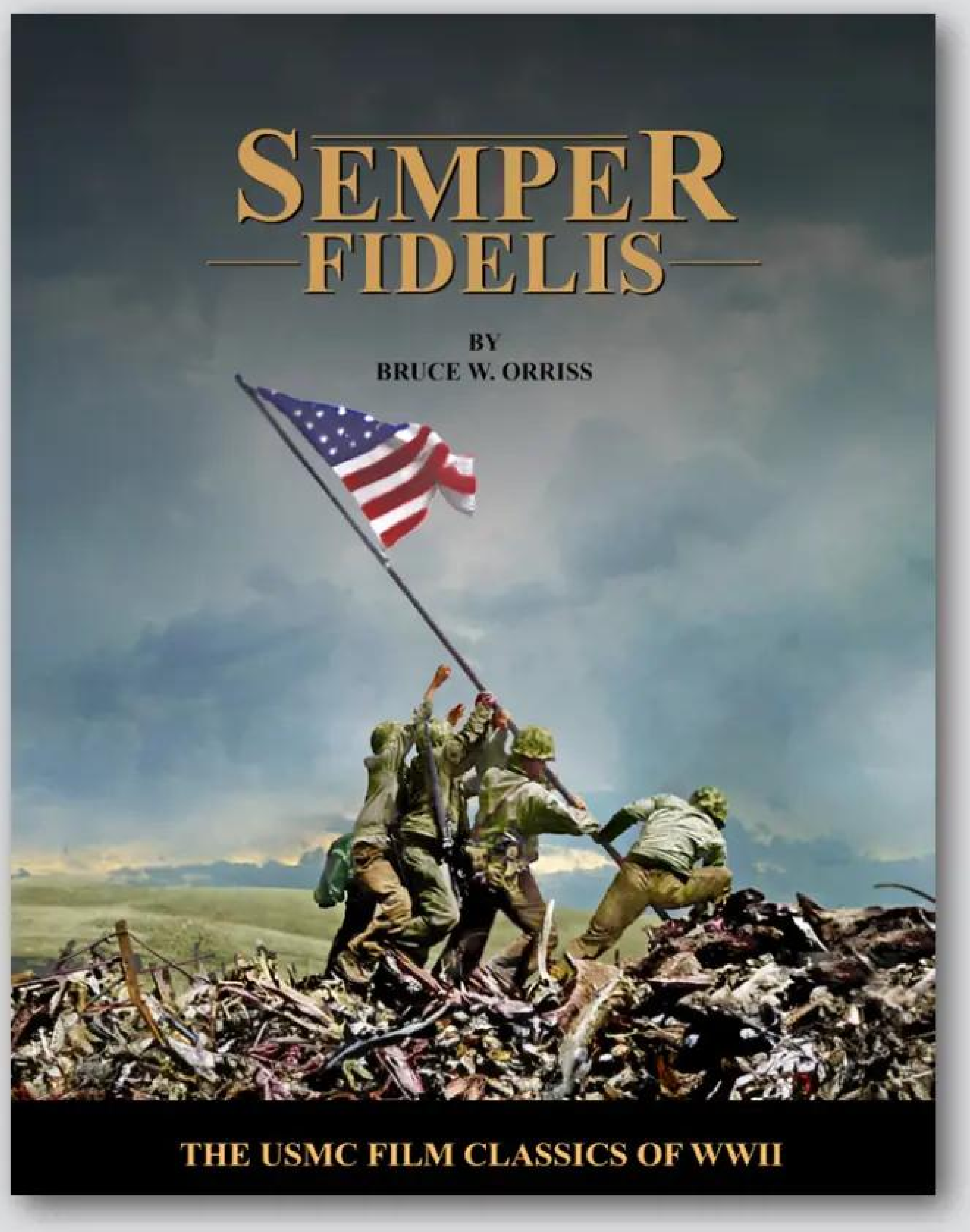

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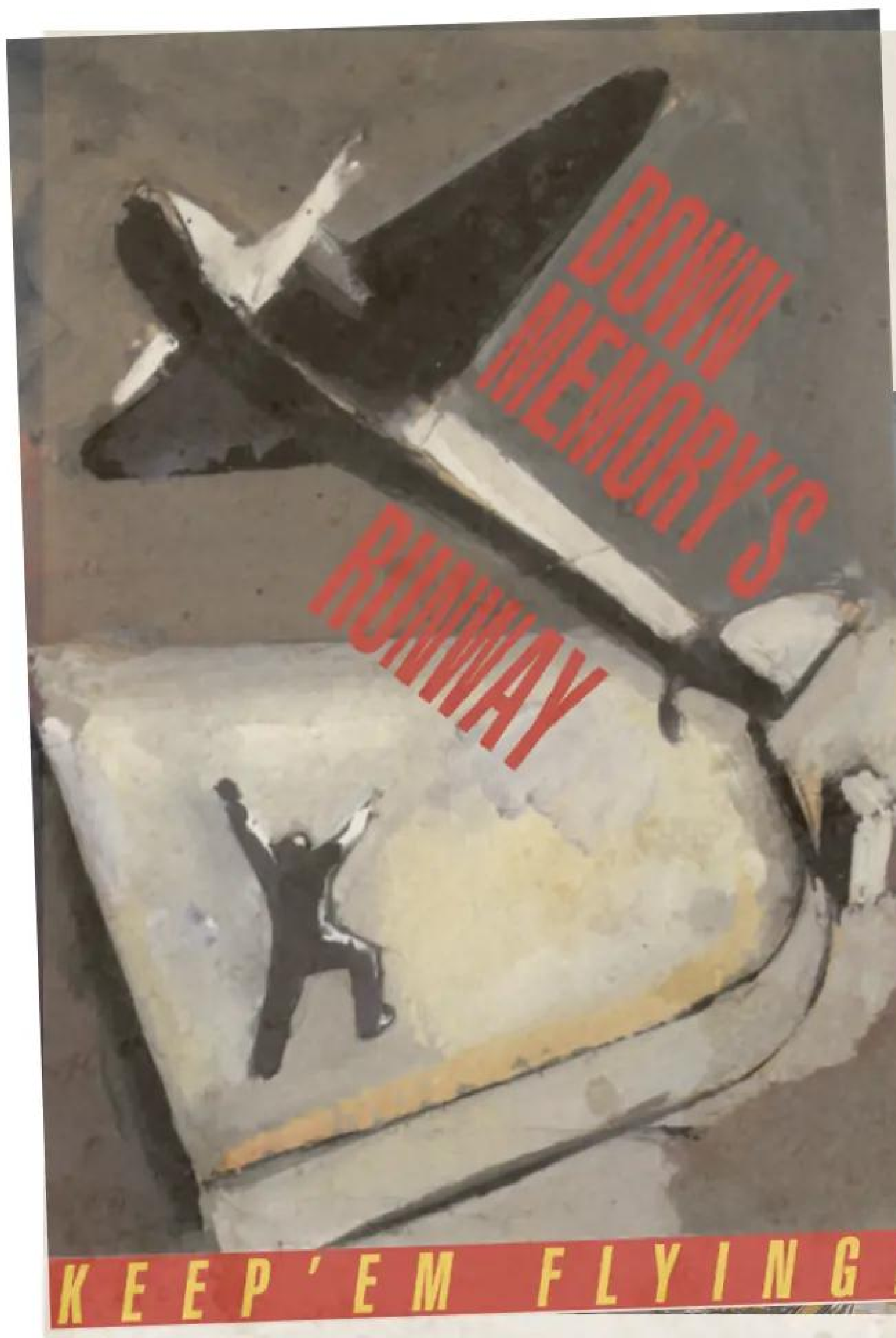
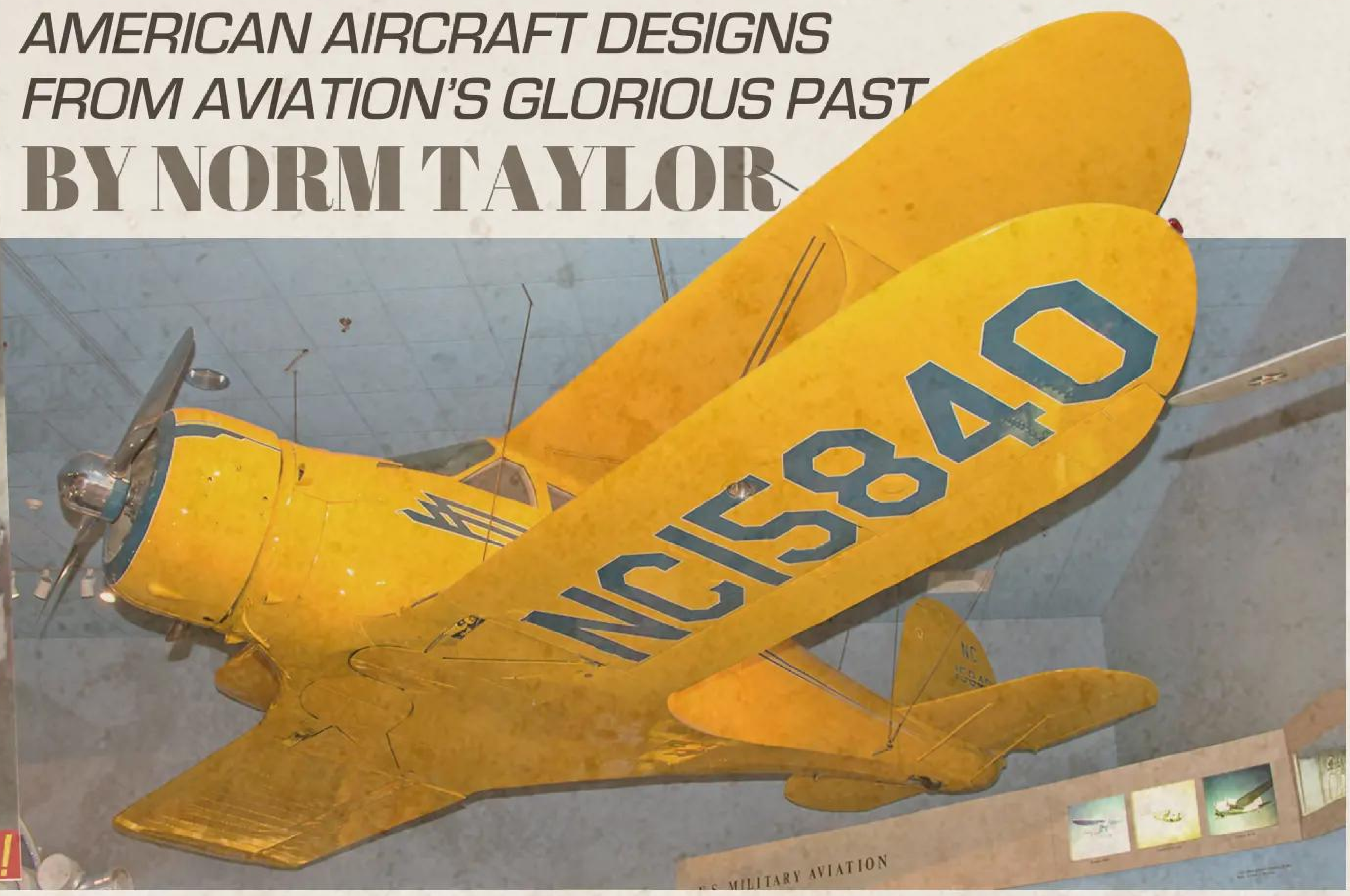
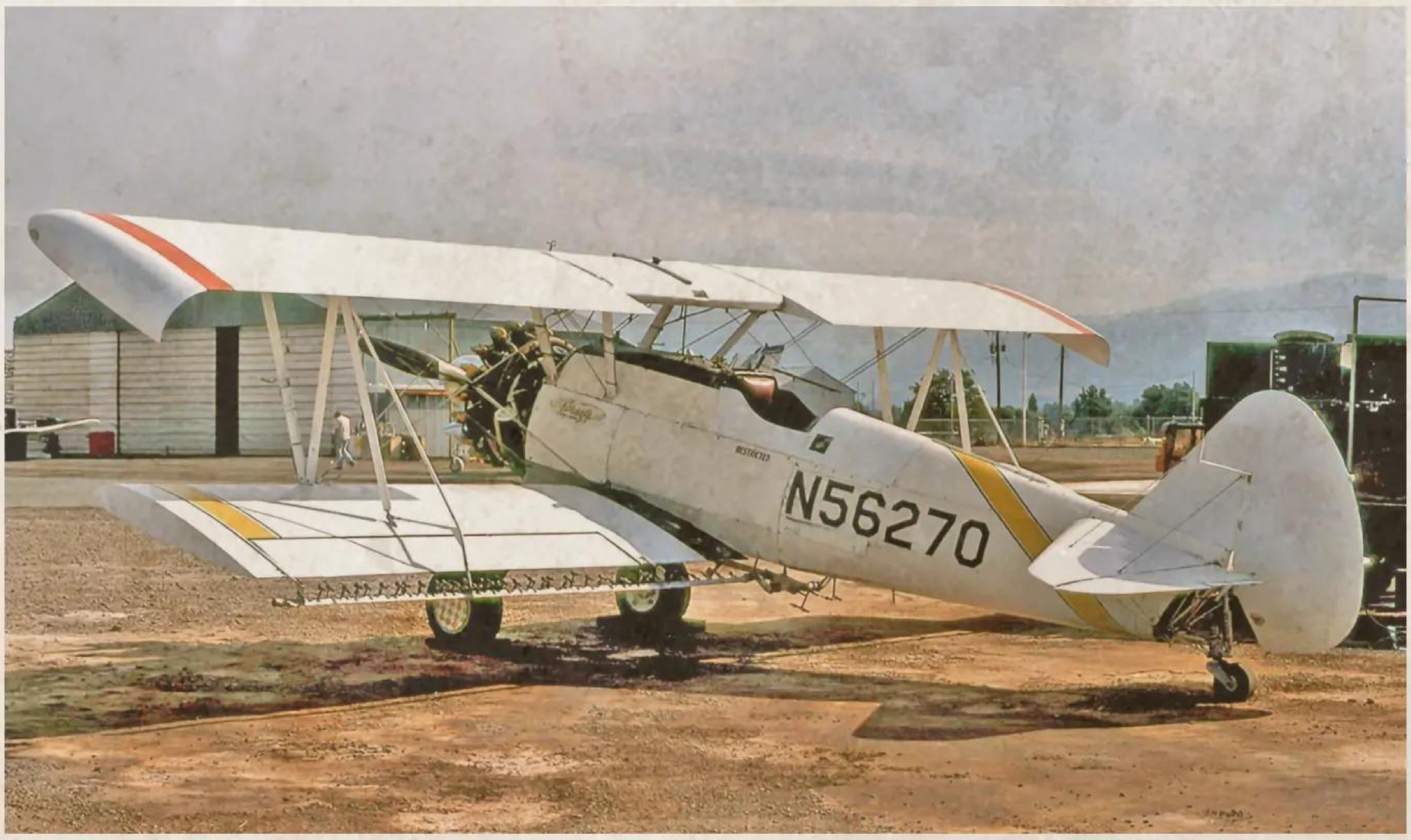


AMERICAN AIRCRAFT DESIGNS FROM AVIATION'S GLORIOUS PAST

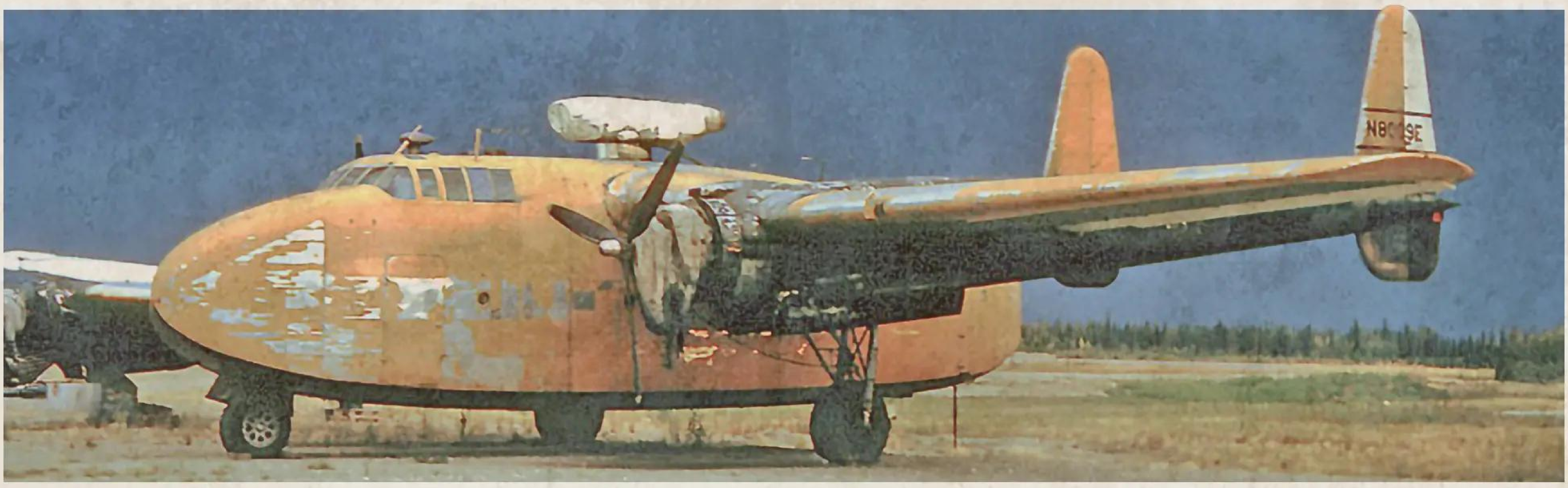
BY NORM TAYLOR



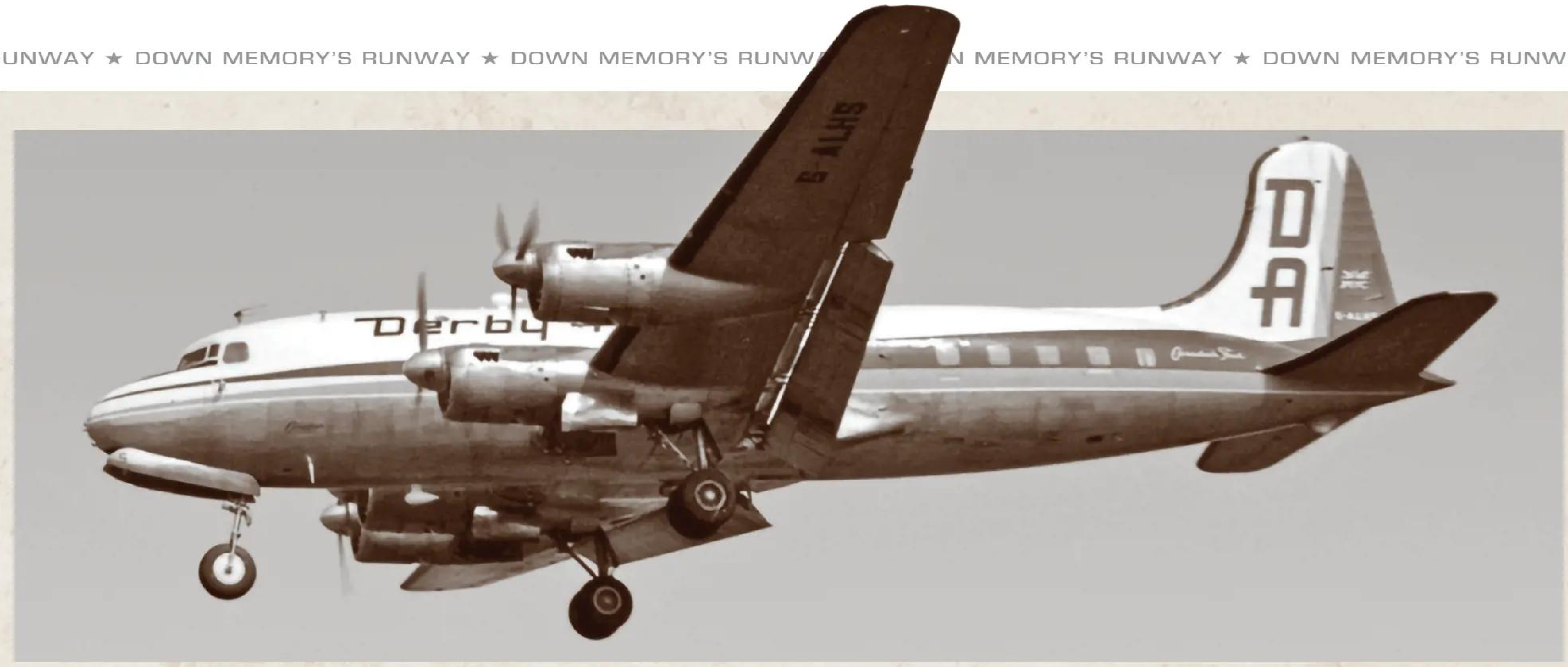
On display at the National Air and Space Museum, Beech C17L Staggerwing NC15840 was completed on 3 July 1936 and once belonged to E.E. Aldrin, father of astronaut Buzz Aldrin, among 19 other owners. After WWII, the aircraft was fitted with a Jacobs L4-MB radial of 225-hp. The classic was donated to the museum during 1981.



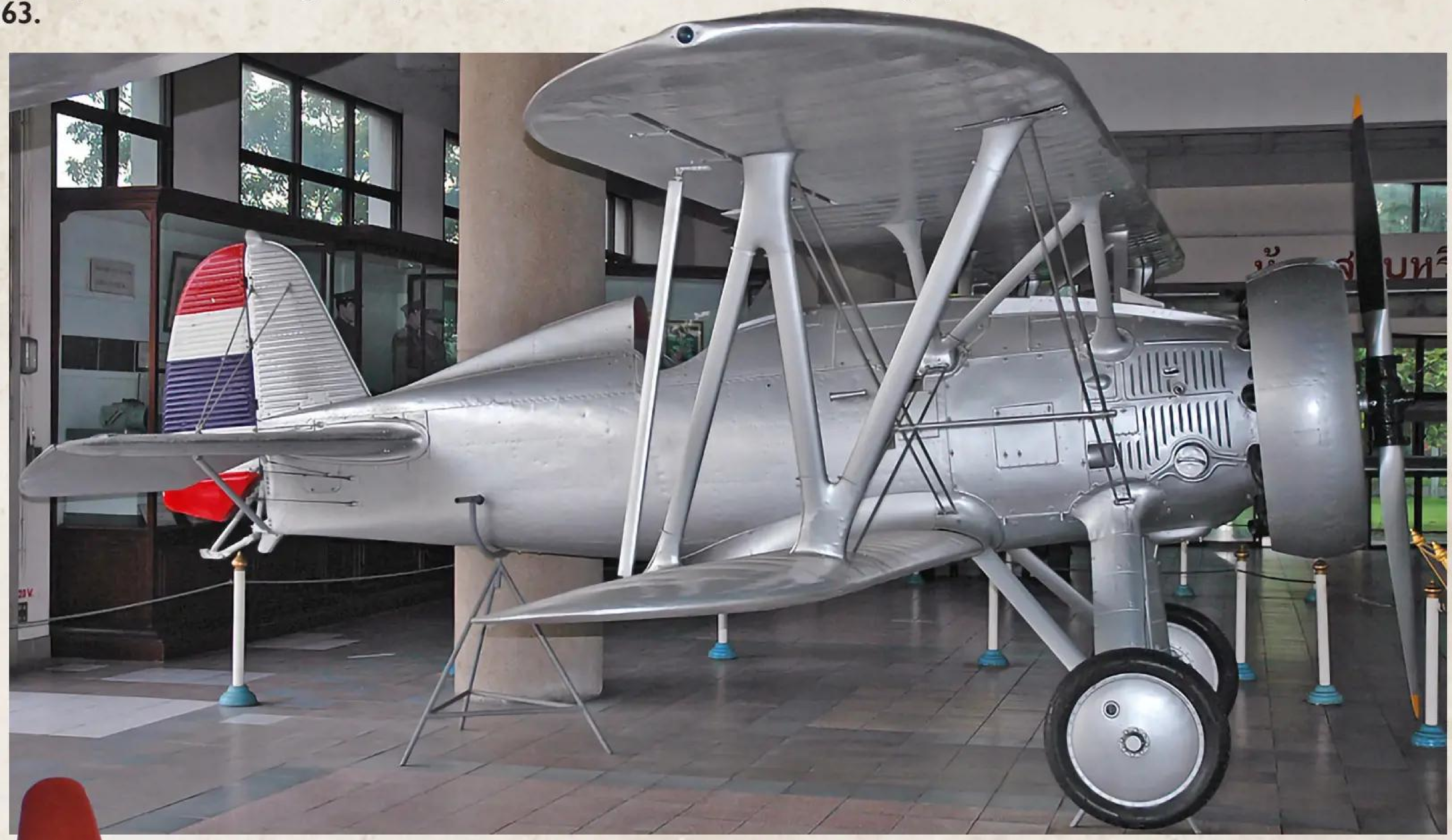
By the 1980s, there were lots of new ag aircraft on the market that could outperform or out-carry the venerable Boeing Stearman PT series of ag aircraft. Yet, at this point in time, there were still hundreds of PTs in operation including PT-17 N56270. Outfitted as a sprayer, the plane was photographed on 24 September 1981 at Rogue Valley Airport in Medford, Oregon. As can be seen, the plane has numerous modifications including drooped tips on the upper wing, metalized fuselage, and a 450-hp R-985 removed from a Vultee BT-13. On 6 February 1982, the plane was preparing to take off for an ag flight from Medford but the pilot reported he was having trouble with the radio. He then had a collision with Taylorcraft N95078 and both aircraft were substantially damaged. The registration was cancelled in 2018.



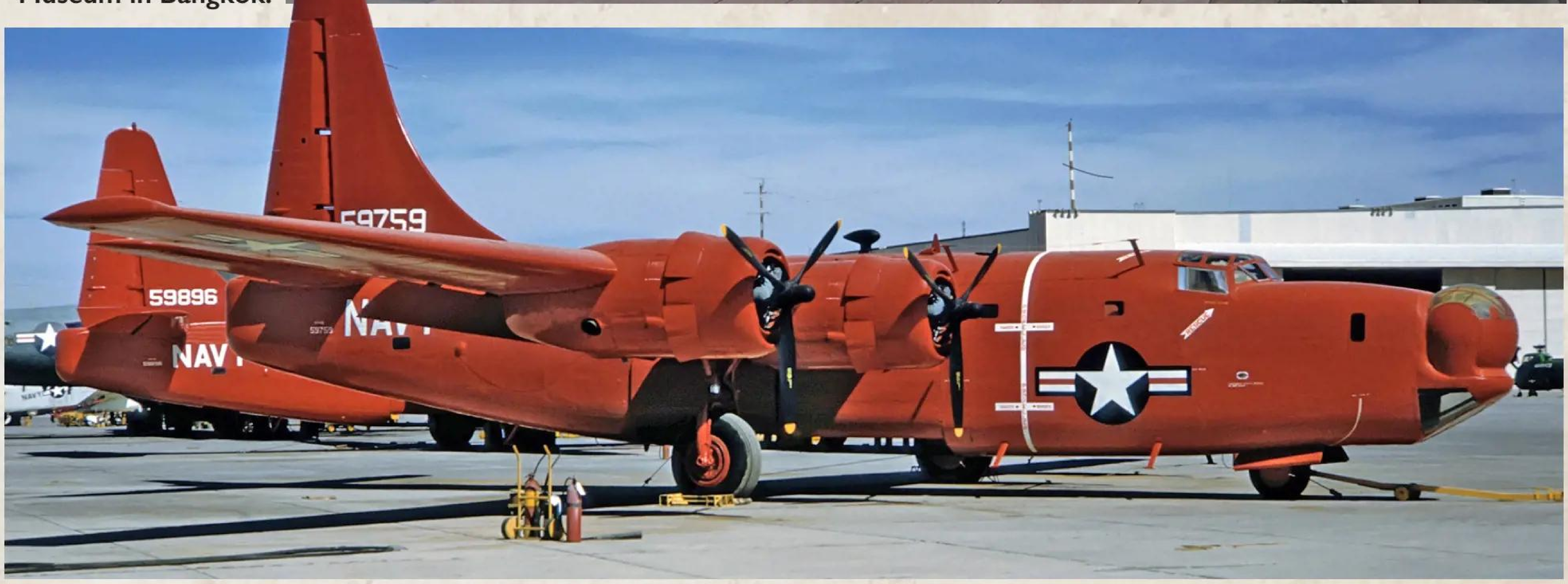
Fairchild C-82 Packet 44-23027 was sold surplus in 1956 as N5095V and was soon acquired by Steward-Davis at Long Beach, California, where it was converted as the Jet Packet 3200 prototype with the addition of a jet pod atop the fuselage. In 1958, it went to Chile where it flew as CC-CRA before returning to California the following year and assuming its previous registration. In 1961, it went to Alaska as N8009E where it was photographed in 1962 flying with Far North Flying Service. By 1968, the Jet Packet was flown to Florida and then operated briefly in Ecuador. By 1980, it was back in Alaska flying with several owners until acquired by Hawkins & Powers in 2006 and moved by surface transport to Greybull, Wyoming. Today, the fuselage and assorted parts of this now rare aircraft remain at Greybull.



The Douglas/Canadair C-4 Argonaut/North Star was an instance of taking an American airframe (DC-4/C-54) and mating it with British engines (transport variants of the Rolls-Royce Merlin replacing Pratt & Whitney R-2000s) to create an interesting airliner was said to have deafened its passengers with the roar of the mighty Merlins. The Argonaut never achieved any great success but it did fly with a number of operators including Derby Airways, whose G-ALHS was photograph on final to Berlin's Tempelhof Airfield on 12 April 1963.



This incredibly rare survivor is a Boeing Model 100E and is one of two acquired by the Royal Thai Air Force in 1931. This was an export version of the P-12E and in Thai (or, Siam as it was known then) service, the aircraft was given the designation of B.Kh.7. One of the two was later supplied to the Japanese Navy and designated AXB Type B Carrier Fighter. Somehow, this aircraft survived WWII and is now on display at the Royal Thai Air Force Museum in Bangkok.



The Consolidated PB4Y-2 Privateer gave the US Navy long and good service. At the end of its service life, numerous examples were converted to QP-4B target drones and BuNo 59759 was photographed at NAS Point Mugu during 1964, wearing its distinctive Insignia Red color scheme. Back then, Point Mugu put on one of the world's best airshows that included "live fire" demonstrations. During one of these events, what was probably the last flying USN Privateer was being directed on a course over the nearby Pacific when it was struck by a Sidewinder missile. One wing folded, and the blazing QP-4B fell into the Pacific to the cheers of thousands of spectators. **AC**

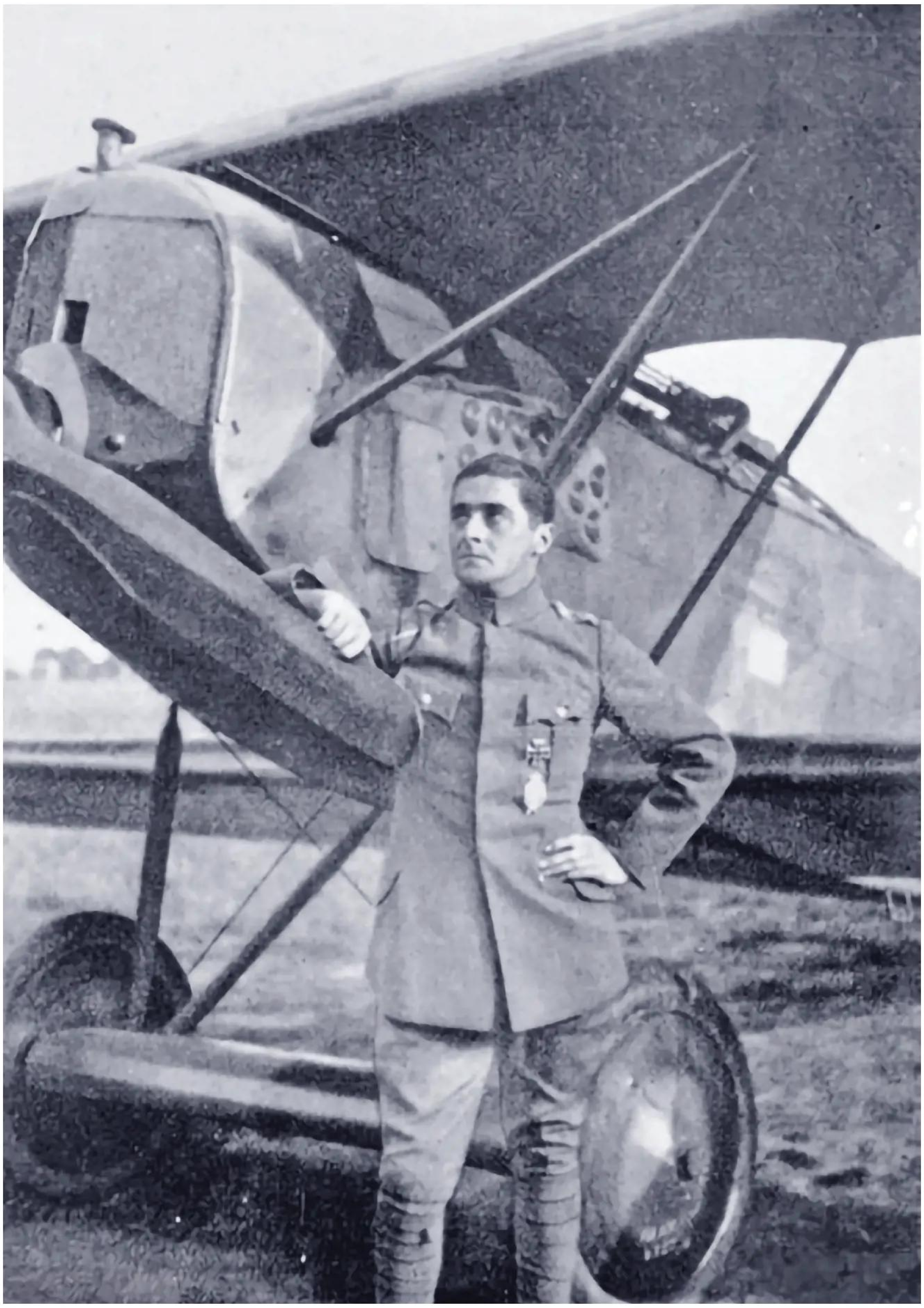
AIRLINES
KEEP 'EM FLYING

LILAC FOKKER D.VII

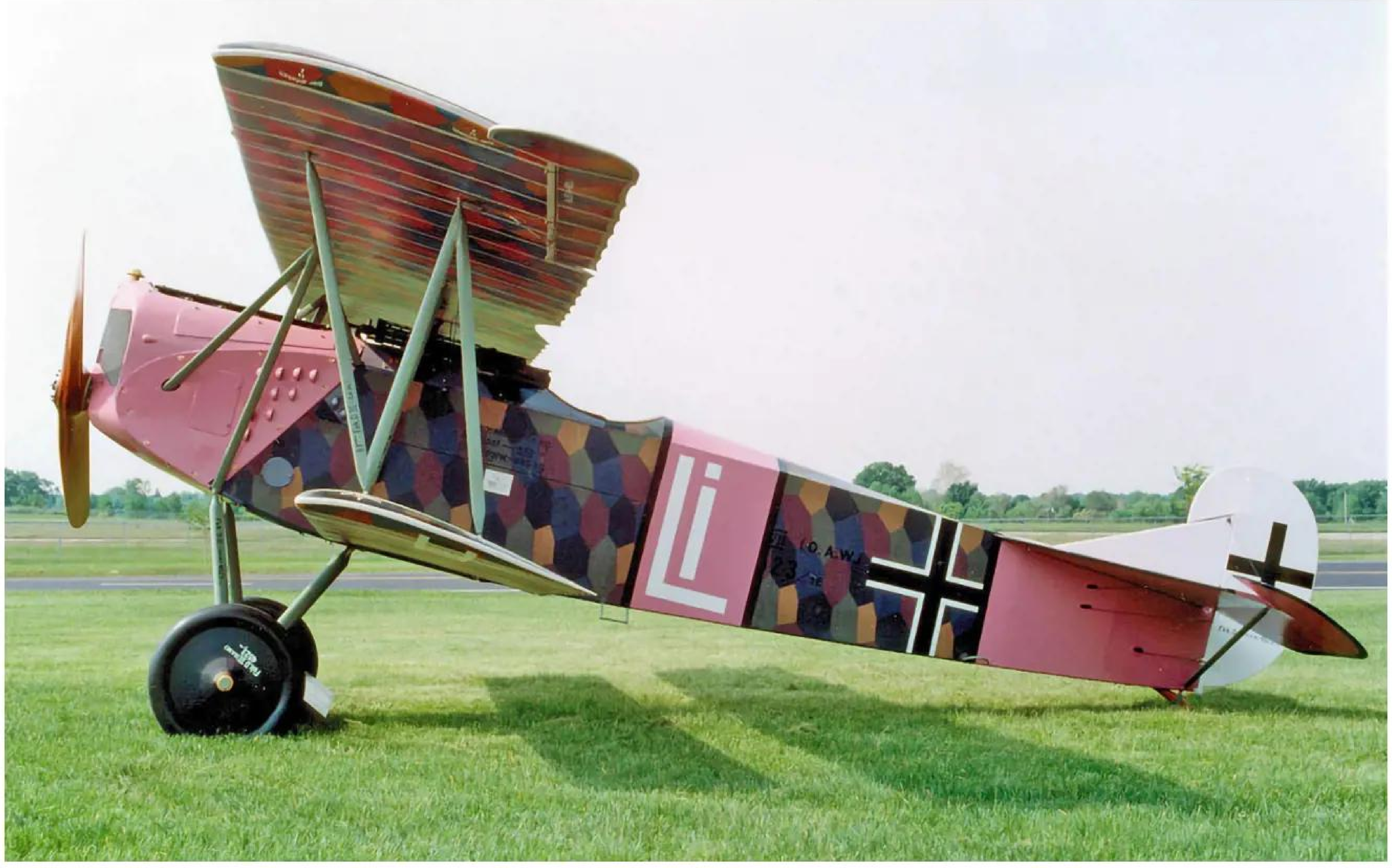
I was surprised to see the photos on Page 16 of the June issue showing the Fokker D.VII replica in the colorful lilac markings of Rudolf Stark. Although not well-known today, Stark served with honor in the 2nd Royal Bavarian Uhlans before switching to aviation in 1917. He was initially assigned to a recon unit but requested a transfer to fighters, moving to *Jagdstaffel 34* on 18 January 1918. While flying fighters, Stark witnessed the final landing of Manfred von Richthofen after he had been hit in combat. He would move on to *Jagdstaffel* 77 and then *Jagdstaffel* 35 where he was wounded in action on 16 September 1918 but would keep flying to the end of the war, scoring his final victory (out of a total of eleven confirmed victories) two days before the Armistice. Stark added a lot of lilac paint to his Fokker Dr. I triplane and then Fokker D.VII and this was done because it was the favorite color of his actress girlfriend.

Al Bennett
Dayton, OH

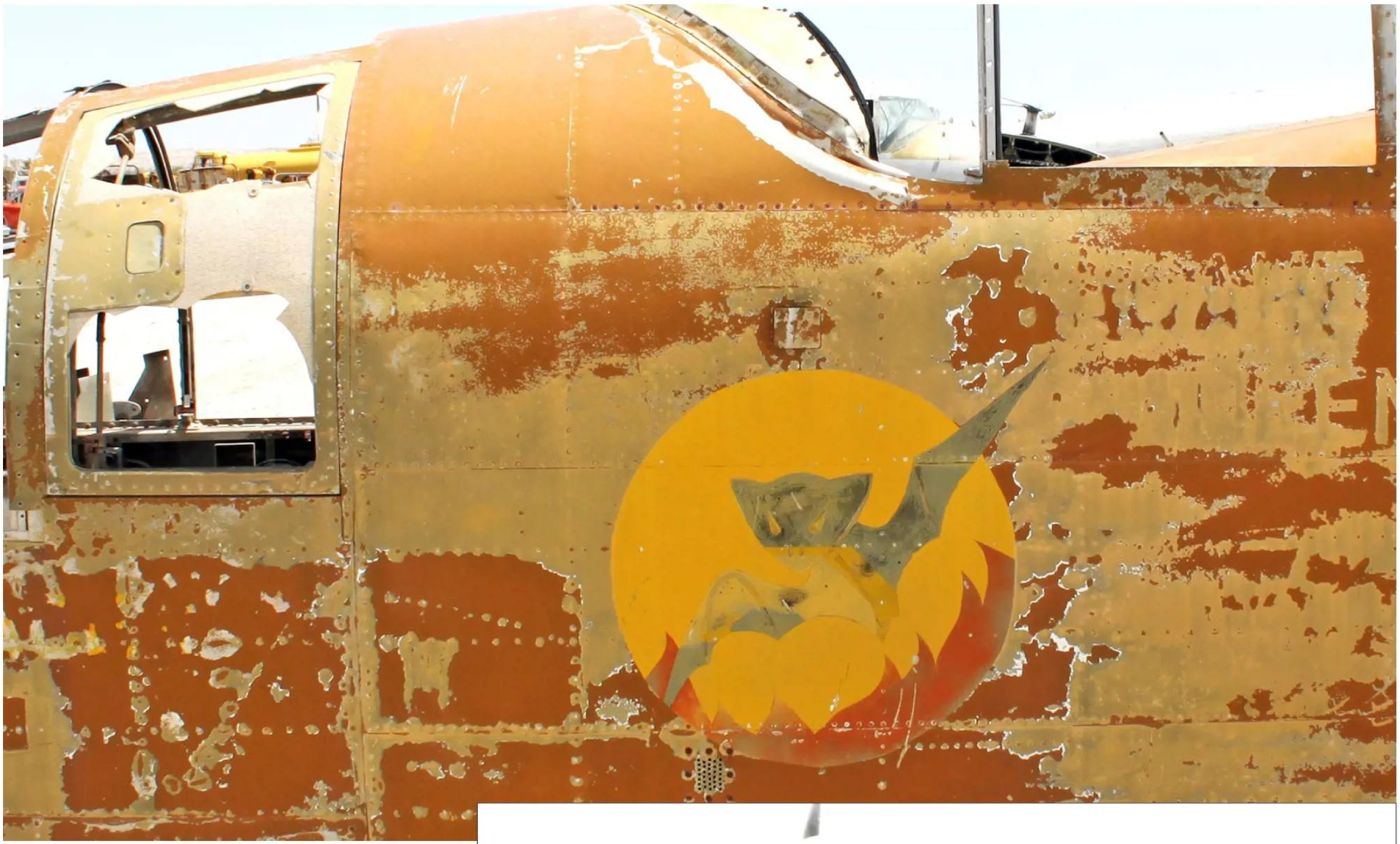
Stark would score eleven confirmed victories.



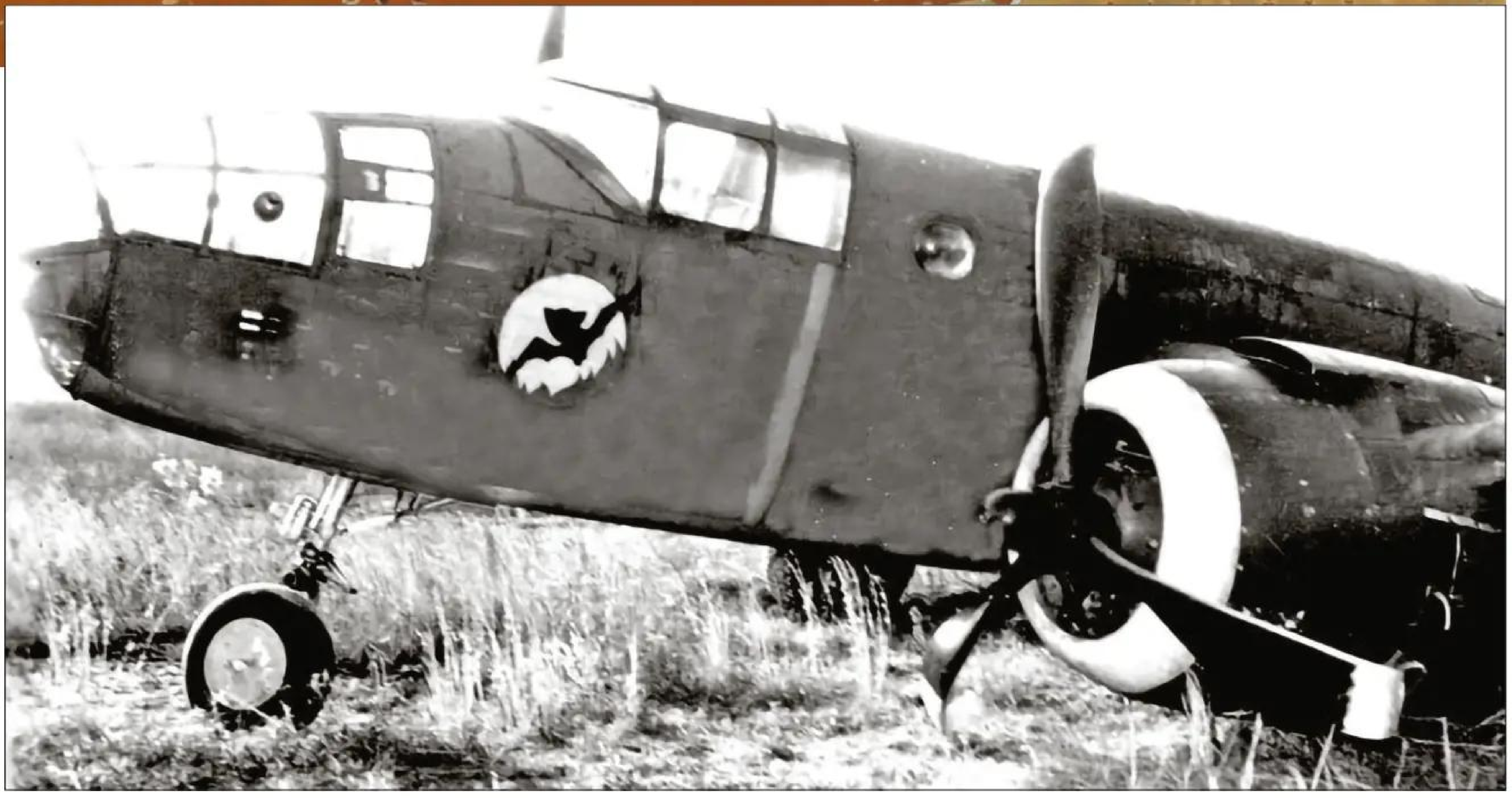
Rudolf Stark with a Fokker D.VII.



The NMUSAF Fokker D.VII finished in Stark's markings.



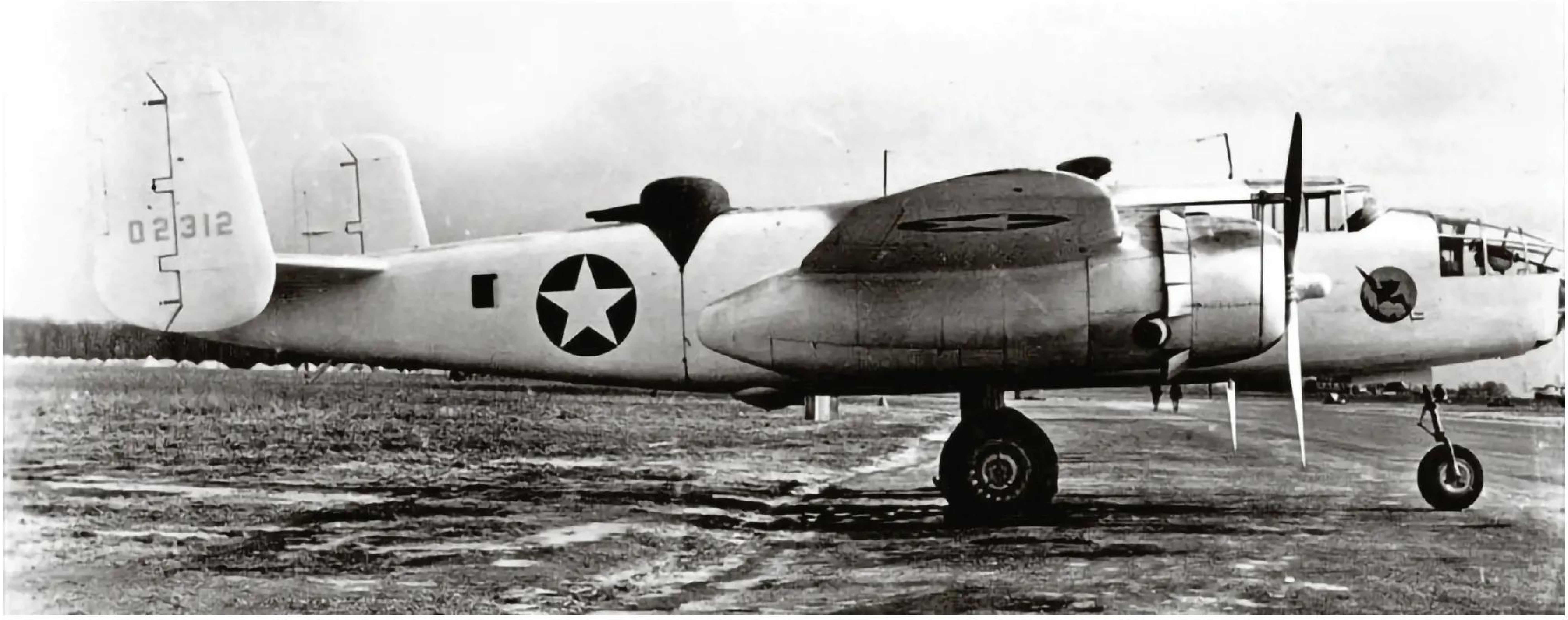
Detail of the bat insignia. This section of skin will be removed and preserved. (S. Whitby)



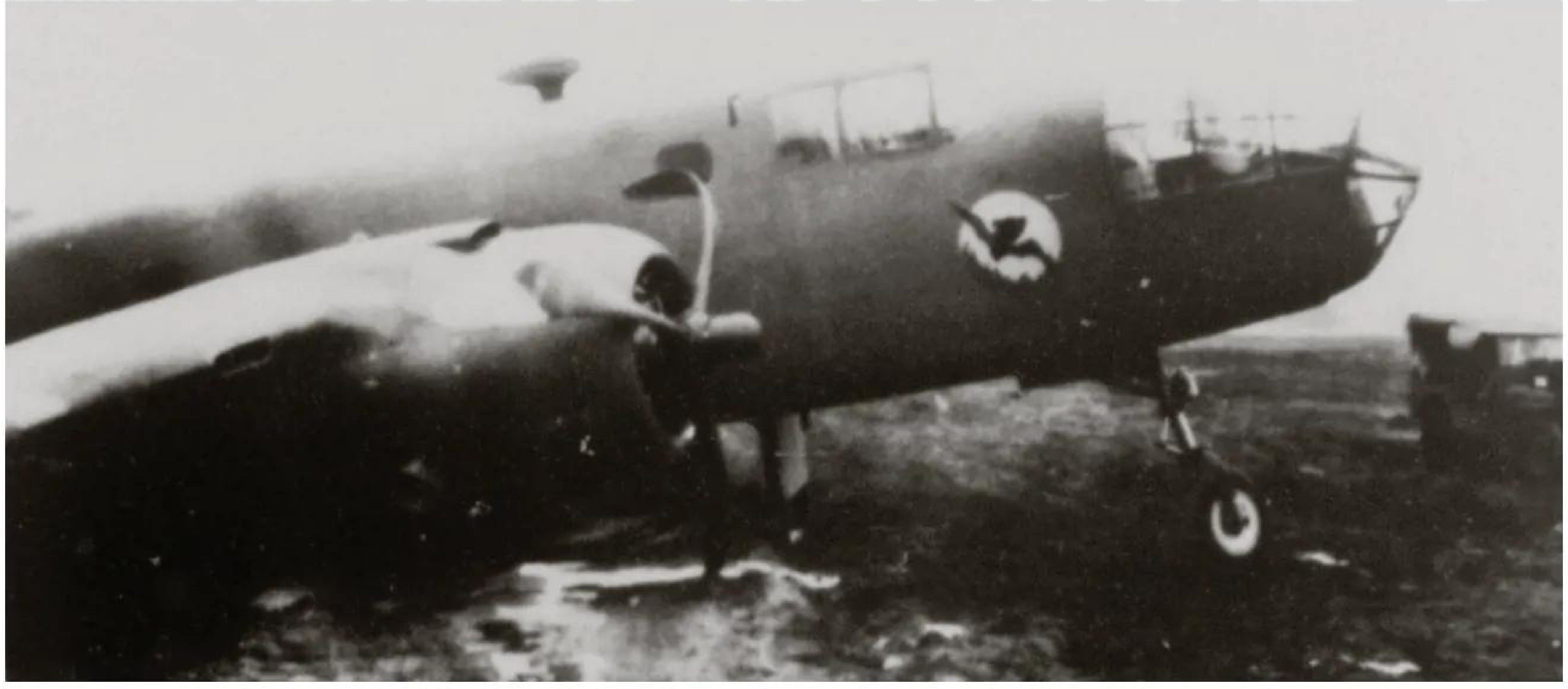
A damaged 3rd Anti-Submarine Squadron B-25B with the insignia displayed on the forward fuselage.

BAT OUTTA HELL

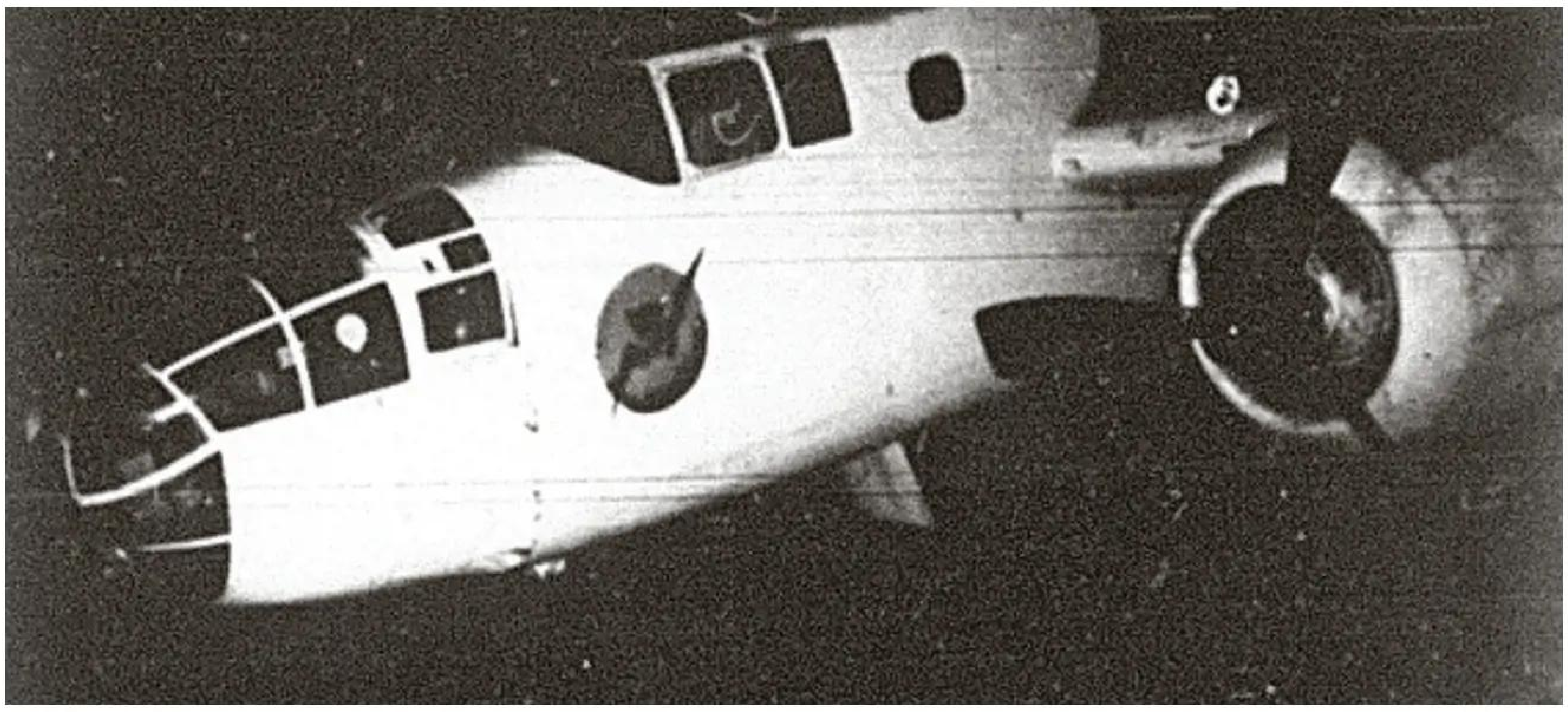
It is great to see the team effort involved in the restoration of Kermit Weeks' ultra-rare B-25B Mitchell. Your article states that you have not been able to find further information regarding the bat insignia on the forward fuselage. The emblem is for the 3rd Anti-Submarine Squadron, which was assigned to the 25th Anti-Submarine Wing. The unit was constituted as the 39th Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on



B-25B 40-2312 assigned to the 3rd Anti-Submarine Squadron and apparently finished in a sea-search camouflage scheme.



B-25B 40-2230 after collapse of the right main gear on 19 May 1942. (S. Whitby)



B-25B 40-2235 at Fort Dix on 3 April 1943 after failure of the nose gear. Note the sea-search camouflage. (S. Whitby)

20 November 1940 and activated on 15 January 1941. It was redesignated as the 3rd Anti-Submarine Squadron (Heavy) on 29 November 1942. The unofficial name was “Bat Outta Hell.” The official description of the insignia is: “On and over a yellow disc with a black border a black bat, outlined in red, wings displayed, flying over a mass of red flames issuing from the lower border of the disc.” The insignia was approved on 17 February 1942. B-25B 40-2347 was acquired on 30 April 1942 and subsequently served in the anti-submarine mission with the 3rd while operating out of Westover, Dover, Charleston, and Fort Dix during 1942 and the spring/summer of 1943. The Mitchell was “Recommend for disposition — Class 26” during November 1943. The plane was at Mather Field, Sacramento, California, and then transferred to nearby McClellan Field, presumably prior to being sent to the movie studio.

George Cully
Via email

SPANISH MESSERSCHMITT

I wanted to correct an inaccuracy regarding the history of the Spanish Bf 109E serial 6-130. This aircraft was flown by *Teniente* (Lieutenant) Eduardo Laucirica in the July issue. The accident took place on the morning of 7 December 1940. While performing aerobatic maneuvers, the fighter entered a vertical dive and made no attempt to recover before impacting a swamp. The impact was violent, producing a towering geyser of debris and mud. Despite efforts to retrieve the wreckage and the pilot’s remains,

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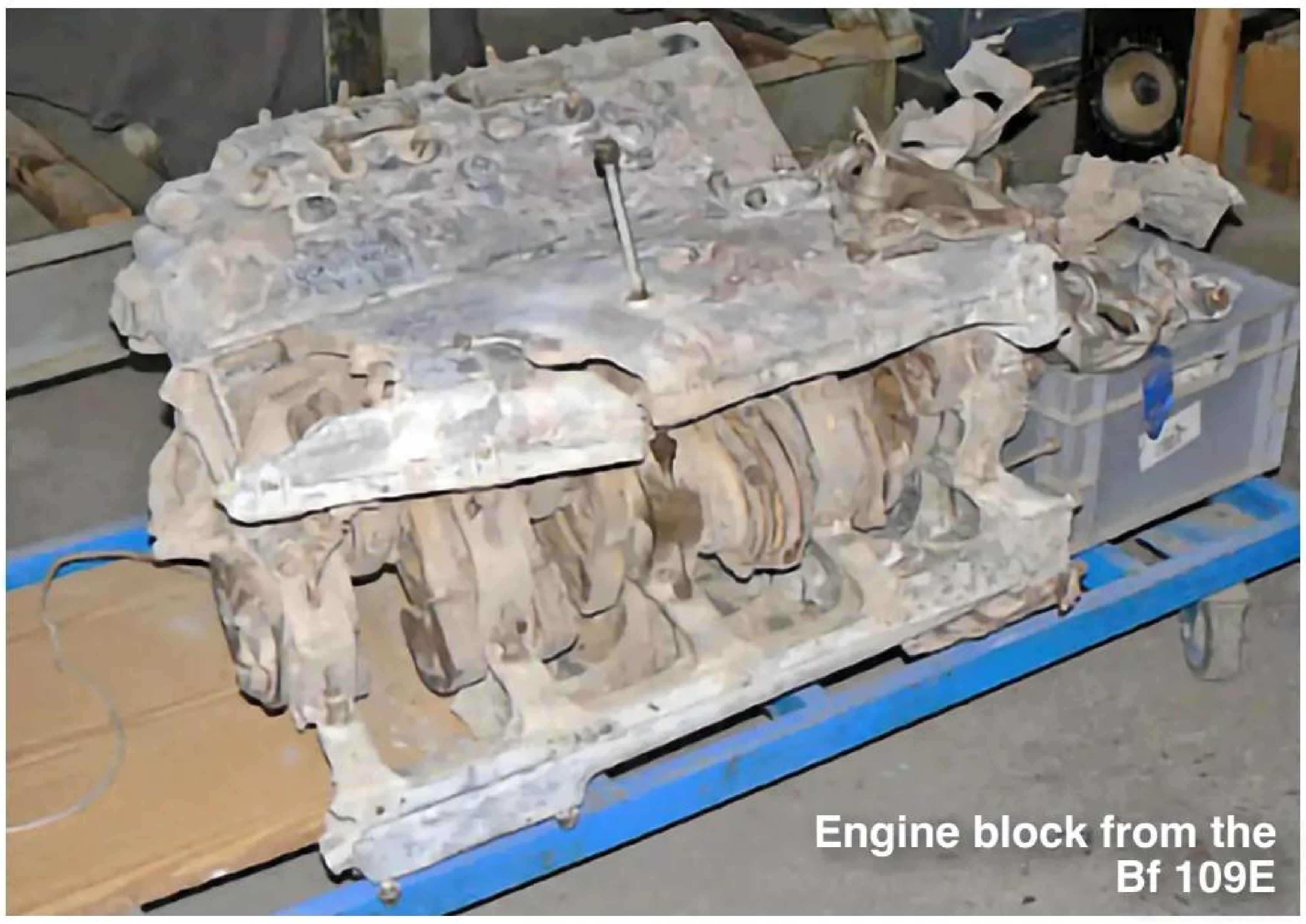


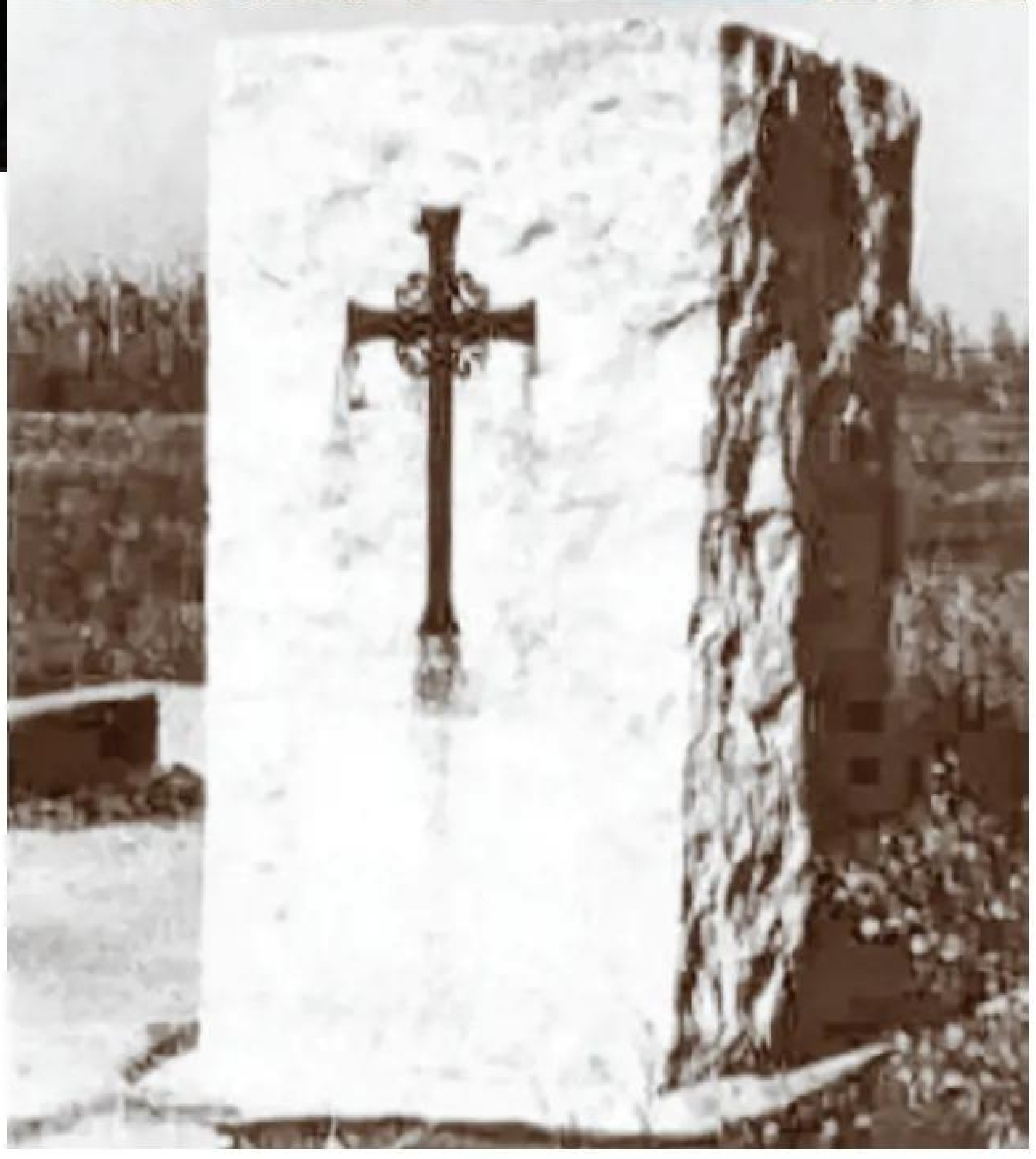
Engine block from the Bf 109E

Recovery crew with pieces of the crashed Bf 109E.

only a single finger was discovered. In response, the pilot's family purchased a small plot of land at the crash site and erected a simple white cross to mark the location.

Contrary to what was stated, the remains of the aircraft were not found in a dump. They were excavated from the swamp over which Barcelona Airport was later built. The wreckage was discovered thanks to the use of georadar during the construction of the airport's third runway on 15 November 2020. The remains of the pilot were found four days later and were interred in Barcelona.

Javier Aranduy
Madrid, Spain



The memorial the pilot's family placed near the crash site.

KEYSTONE LOCKHEEDS

Thoroughly enjoyed Ralph Pettersen's "Keystone Lockheeds" article. In 2022, several of us retired P-3 Orion aircrew were attending the US Navy's Maritime Patrol Association symposium at NAS Jacksonville. I heard that MHD

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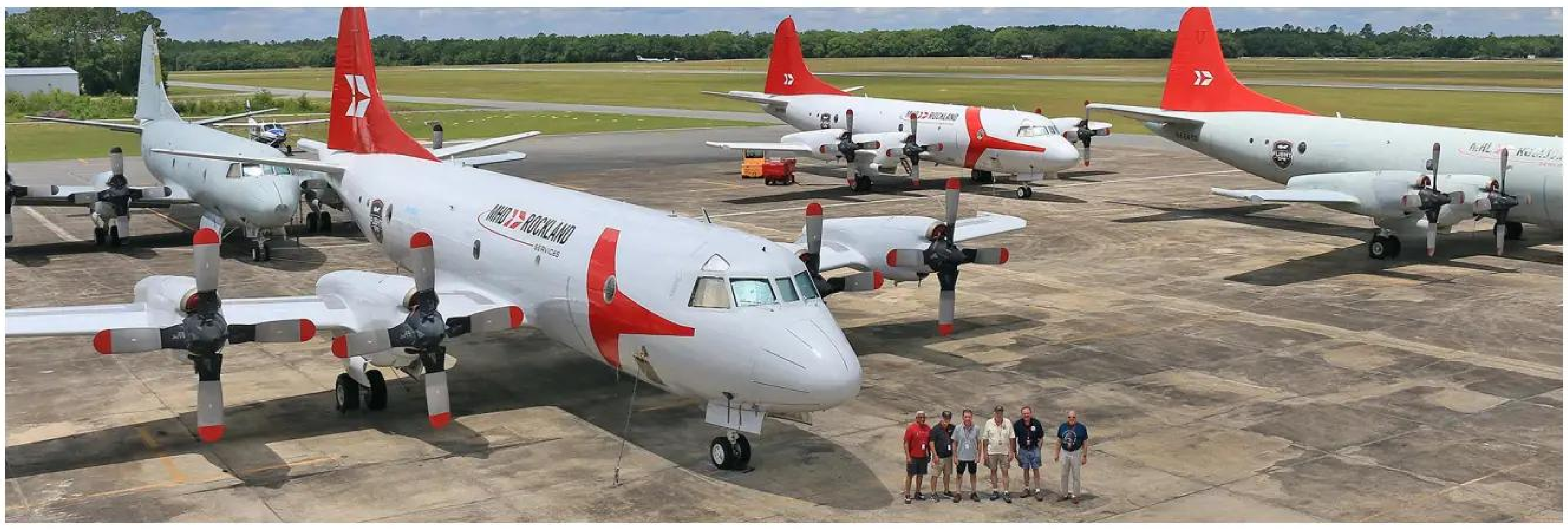
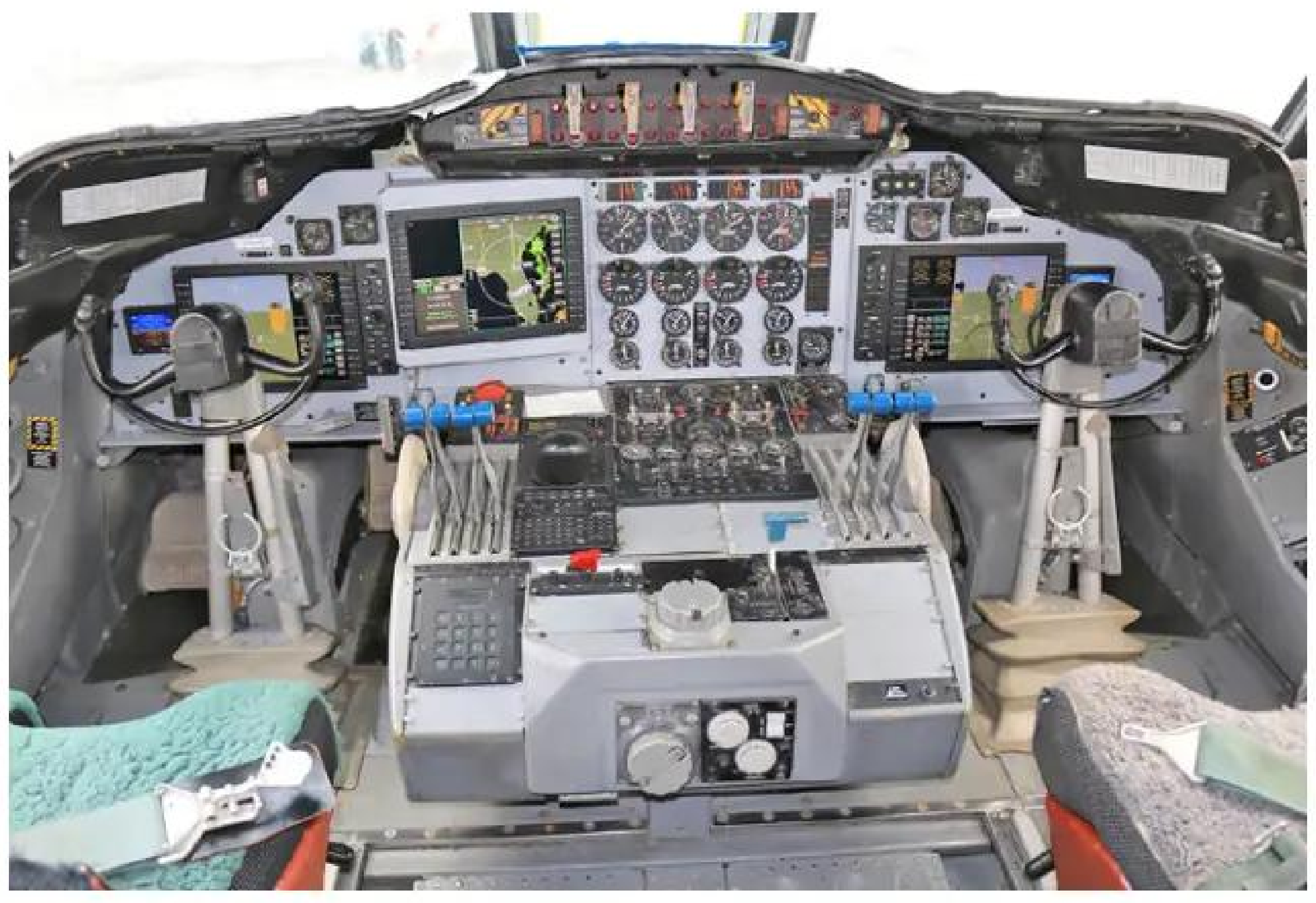

Jerry Lach's overhead view of the MHD Rockland ramp.


Panel of P-3 N665BD.

Rockland had a number of foreign P-3s which we wanted to see. We arranged a tour of the MHD Rockland facility and I can't say enough about how nice and capable the entire MHD Rockland group was. They showed us not only the P-3s used for training but the fire-bomber conversions as well. As they saw I was an avid photographer, they brought out a man-lift for overhead photos. It was great to be in the mighty P-3 again and smell that same smell that all old military aircraft have. As a suggestion, how about more interior photos of the aircraft you feature?

Jerry Lach
Via email

WRONG STATE

On Page 63 of the June issue, you misidentify the photo of the B-25A having been taken at Felts Field in Oregon. Felts Field is, of course, in Spokane, Washington. Keep up the great work. Spokane was my hometown.

Art Pohl
Via email

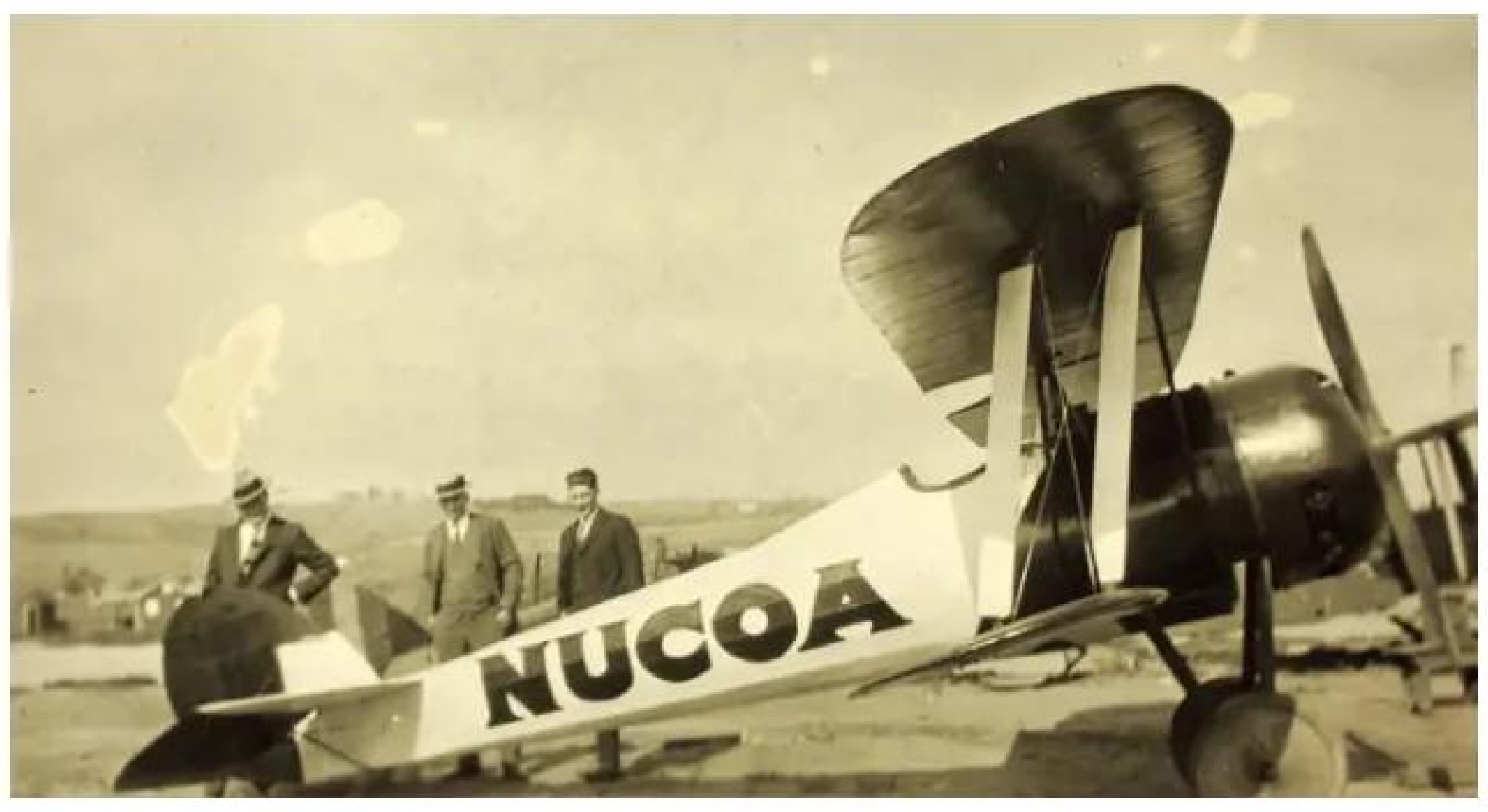
NUCOA NIEUPORT

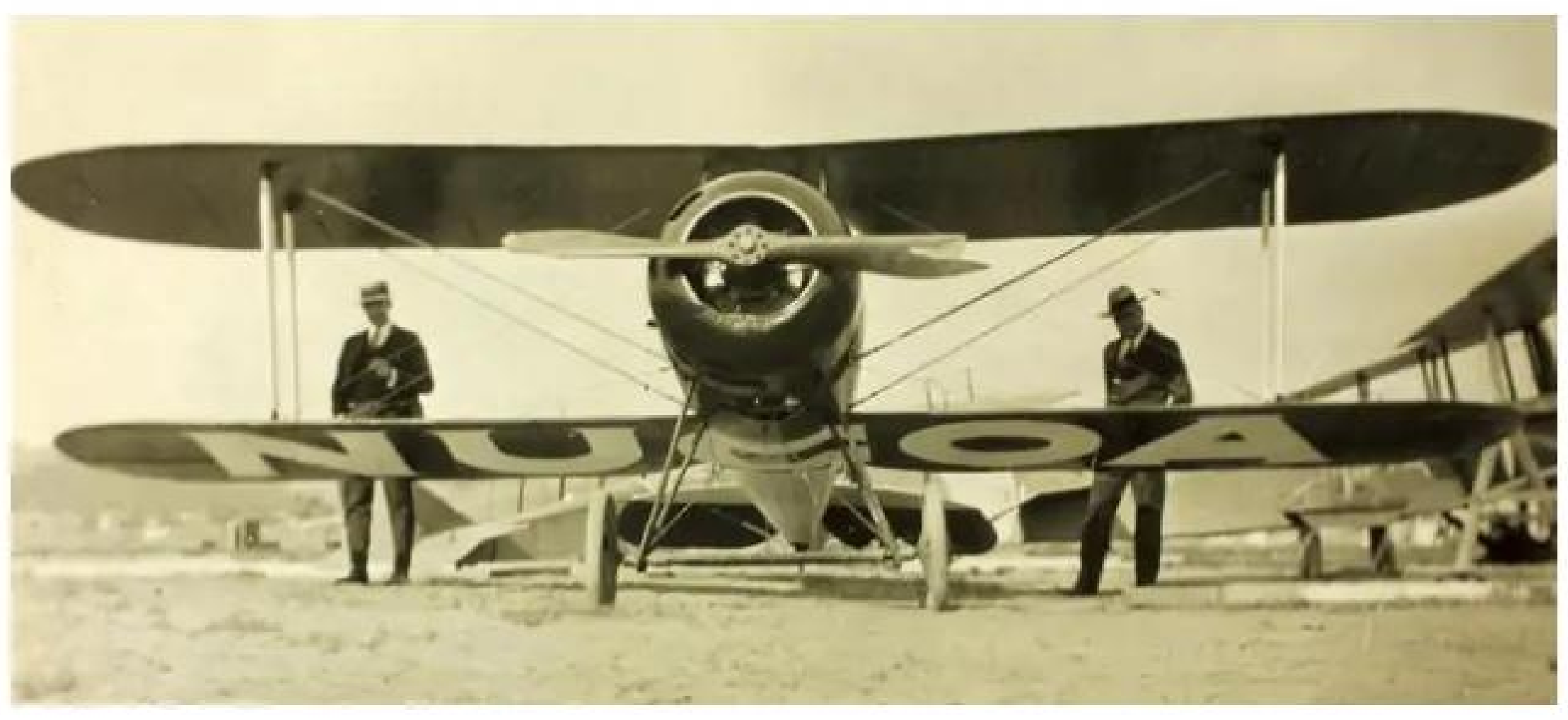
I was very pleased to see the photographs of the American Heritage Museum's Nieuport N.28 being "healed" on Page 20 of the July issue. First, Mikael Carlson is the only one to repair this rare and original survivor and I also believe he was one of the very few pilots capable of safely pulling off the crash-landing after the engine problems. The N.28 has always fascinated me and I have been trying to compile a listing of Nieuport 28s operated in a civilian capacity in the USA following the Great War. It is not an easy task since time has eliminated a lot of the records, combined with the fact these early aircraft did not have to carry a civilian registration.

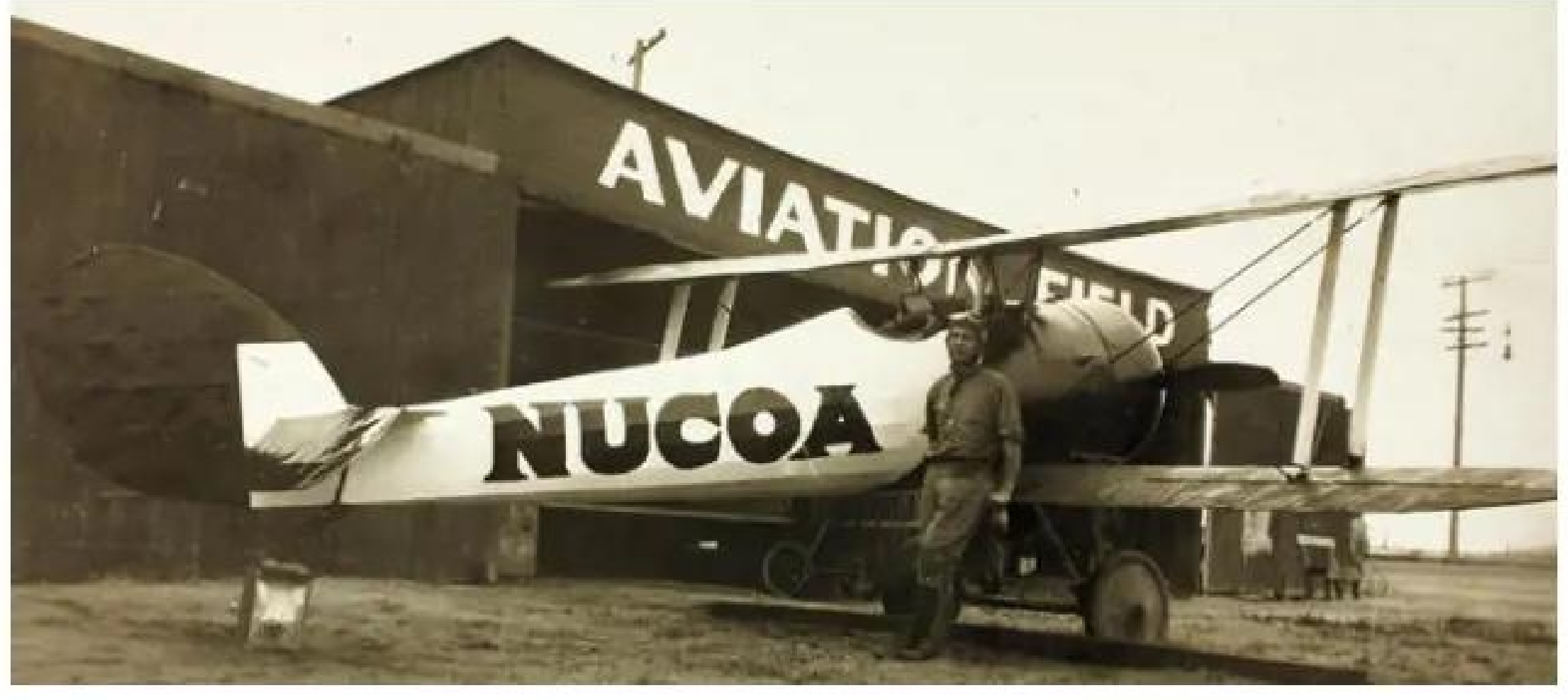
I am attaching photos of such a Nieuport. As you can see, there is no form of identifying number on the aircraft. It was either owned by or leased by Nucoa — a popular margarine spread of the time period (and which is still in business). It was presumably flown around to various events so spectators could see the Nucoa markings.

Robb Hall
Springfield, MA

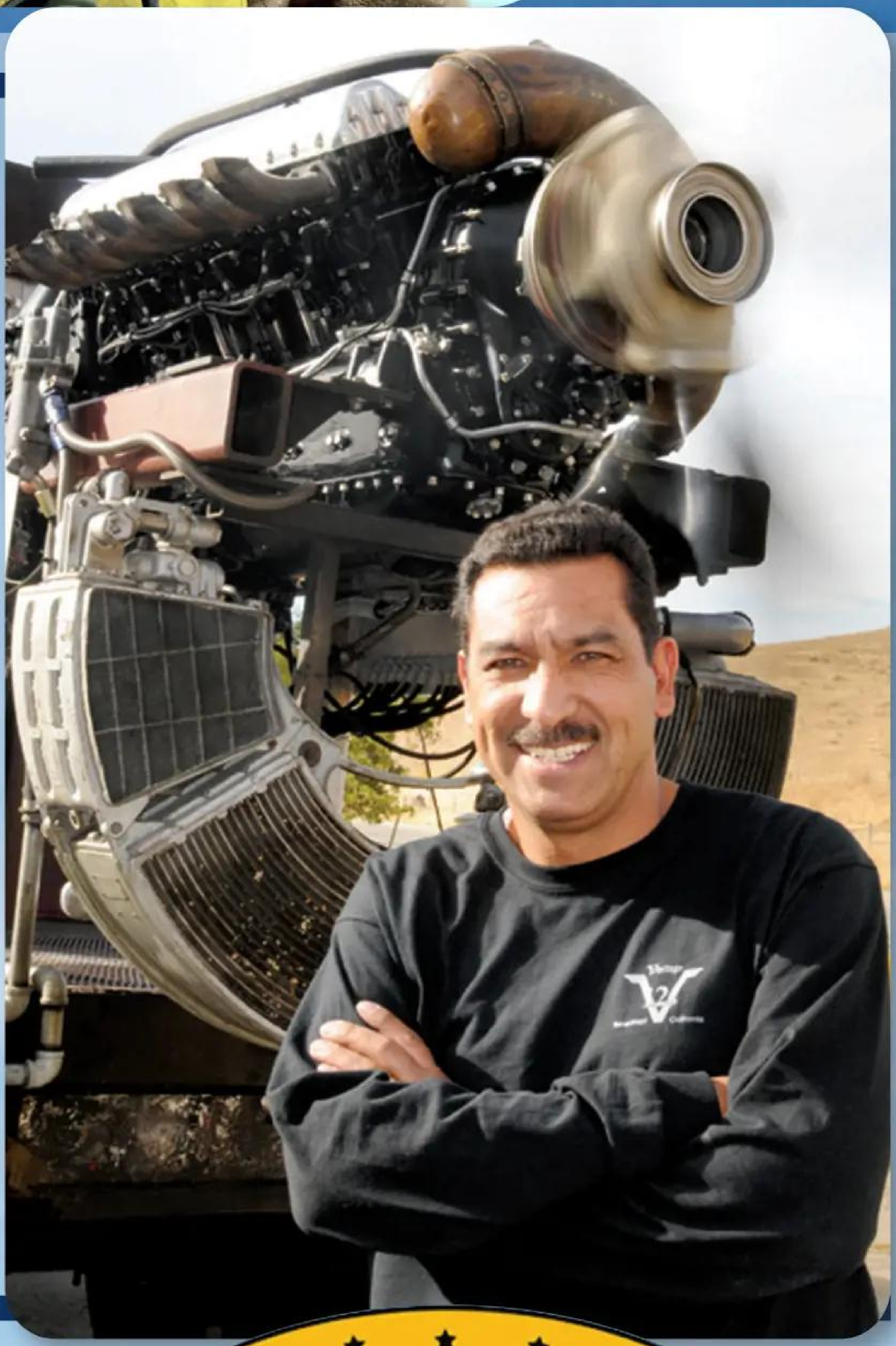
AC


Freshly-painted N.28 displaying the markings of its sponsor.


Nucoa was painted the length of the bottom wing.


The Nieuport and its unidentified pilot.

WE KEEP THE WARBIRDS FLYING!



HONORING THE VICTORY

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CONTACT: JOSE FLORES
VINTAGE V-12s, Inc.
1582 Goodrick Drive #1, Tehachapi, CA 93561
Phone: 661-822-3112 • Fax: 661-822-3120
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.vintageV12s.com

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